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THE American Federation of Labor met in deepest gloom at Cincinnati a year ago. Its membership was dwindling and even those workers who still held union cards were to a large extent unable to pay dues. In a number of locals the unemployed were actually in a majority and were threatening to assume command. The leaders were visibly frightened by the growing unrest among the rank and file. Under pressure they yielded to the demand that the federation reverse its historic policy and work for unemployment insurance. Had the rebellious rank-and-file elements been better organized, the federation officials would undoubtedly have yielded much more. At the opening of the convention in Washington this year the gloom of Cincinnati had given way to cautious but genuine optimism. For the first time in more than a decade the membership is markedly increasing. The finances of the organization are improving, not to any prodigious extent, for unemployment is still pinching the A. F. of L., but at least sufficiently to insure that the operating expenses of the organization will be met and official salaries paid. The chief reason for the federation's optimism, however, is to be found in its relationship to the Roosevelt Administration and the NRA. It feels that for the first time in its history it has the active and direct support of the federal government. No longer must it face a hostile Administration composed of tory Republicans; no longer need it seek to advance its interests by lobbying or by backstairs diplomacy. Instead, with several of its own representatives directly participating in the work of the Administration, and with the National Recovery Act guaranteeing the right of collective bargaining, it has every reason to feel encouraged to come out openly and fight not only for its own special interests but for the rights of the whole working class.

THE WASHINGTON CONVENTION has also marked the first break in the extreme right wing of the federation leadership. It has witnessed the decline of Matthew Woll and his henchmen, a valid cause for thankfulness. Mr. Woll has been too close to the Hoover Republicans and the bankers in the last few years. Moreover, he has been devoting too much time to denouncing radicalism and not enough to the needs of workers. John L. Lewis, of course, gains his strength from the fact that the United Mine Workers is the most active and the fastest-growing union in the country today. Reports that he would challenge William Green for the presidency of the A. F. of L. appear as this is written to have been premature. He is too smooth a politician to take such a step until he has consolidated his own position within the organization. It is entirely possible that at next year's convention he will be a successful contender for the highest office in the labor movement, but as he has never hesitated to betray the miners, especially in southern Illinois and western Pennsylvania, the federation would not gain by exchanging the unimaginative Green for the aggressive but never very dependable Lewis. Better than either would be an entirely new leadership. Elsewhere in this issue is a factual presentation of grave abuses which the present leadership of the A. F. of L. has tolerated and condoned, the onus of which is sufficient to injure seriously, if not to wreck, any labor movement. Indeed, the weakness of organized labor in America has been largely ascribable to the ineptitude and frequent corruption of its leaders. Now that the workers are offered the greatest opportunity that has come to them since the dawn of the labor movement in America, incompetent leadership must no longer be allowed to blight their prospects.

THIS FEELING of optimism at the Washington convention does not mean, however, that the federation is entirely satisfied with the work of the NRA or the promises of the Roosevelt Administration. Outwardly the federation spokesmen are enthusiastic about the NRA and only let the barest suggestion of criticism enter their public speeches.

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The central point of their criticism is that the working week has not been shortened enough to take up all the slack in employment. They want the working week reduced to thirty hours or fewer. In this they have the support of Secretary of Labor Perkins, who told the convention that the present maximum-hours and minimum-wage agreements must be improved if the unemployment and purchasing-power problems are to be satisfactorily adjusted. Privately labor spokesmen go much farther in their criticism. They feel that their representatives in the NRA have no real power, or at least not enough to overcome the influence of the industrialists and bankers also represented in General Johnson's organization. Moreover, they want to know why General Johnson and his associates do not take vigorous action against the employers who have been openly or covertly violating the permanent codes. It is said that the federation has received 300,000 individual complaints of such violations. On the other hand, the federation has gone on record as opposing militant class action. It wants to continue along the familiar pathway laid out by Samuel Gompers, who insisted that progress could only be attained by cooperation between capital and labor. It has, however, set planned economy as the goal of this cooperation, a goal that would have been strongly opposed by Mr. Gompers.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT has made no finer appointment than that of Professor James M. Landis of the Harvard Law School to the Federal Trade Commission. Although only thirty-four years of age, Mr. Landis possesses one of the most enlightened minds in the legal profession. He collaborated in the drafting of the excellent new securities act, which the investment bankers are now seeking to emasculate. An integral part of this act was the formation of the securities division of the Federal Trade Commission, to which any new flotations must be submitted for approval before they can be issued. While the drafters of the act threw about it as many safeguards as possible to prevent its being wrecked by unfriendly or indifferent officials, human frailty being what it is and the stake being high, it is desirable that someone of unquestioned ability and integrity, whose interest in the legislation is manifest, be placed on guard to watch and direct its enforcement.

THE SUGAR stabilization agreement born after weeks of labor under the direction of John Lee Coulter of the Tariff Commission, which has been not incorrectly described as "an agreement of the refiners, by the refiners, and for the refiners," has wisely been scrapped by Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace following conferences with President Roosevelt. As pointed out by *The Nation* last week, this pact not only would have spelled the ruin of Cuba but would have worked a needless hardship on the American consumer. Moreover, it provided no such protection for the scandalously exploited workers in the American beet-sugar fields as has been granted to some labor by the codes. The basic evil in the sugar situation is a legacy of Republican tariff policy. Abolition of the sugar duty is desirable. It should be effected by gradual reduction over a period of from three to five years, in order to cause a minimum of disturbance in the producing areas. But if the American family is to be taxed two cents on every pound of this indispensable staple, some of the profits might at least go to help the American farmer—which they would do in part if Cuba as a market were restored—and to the workers who produce the sugar. Hitherto the "protection" has been for a small group of capitalists to whom 120,000,000 people are paying tribute.

THE Grau San Martin Government is in its fifth week as this is written. Whatever may be its shortcomings in the eyes of Ambassador Sumner Welles, it has demonstrated a stability not short of extraordinary. Continued non-recognition delays recovery and imperils the objectives in Cuba to which the Roosevelt Administration is committed. It is unfortunate that one man, however well intentioned, and whatever his official position, should be able to impede the self-determination of the Cubans and to endanger the friendly relations between the American and the Cuban people. Secretary Hull should order the recognition of the existing regime in Cuba without further delay.

IF THE NAZIS go from bad to worse, as is indicated by the new press code just announced by Dr. Goebbels, which makes him second only to Hitler in dictatorial powers, their actions are not going unscathed. At Geneva one who proclaimed himself proud to be a Tory, William G. A. Ormsby-Gore, replied magnificently to Dr. Goebbels's statement on the German attitude toward the Jew and the Goebbels pretension that the Jews did not constitute a racial minority. He rejected every one of the Hitler doctrines effectively and eloquently. Among other things he said:

> I belong to what is called the Tory Party of the Right. Every nineteenth of April, Primrose Day, I and others of my party go on a pilgrimage and lay primroses on the statue of one who led my party for a whole generation—I refer to Disraeli, the Earl of Beaconsfield, thrice Prime Minister.

He then declared of Disraeli that throughout his life in public and in private "he proclaimed himself the proudest of Jews, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as did St. Paul," and he added this truth: "Wherever Jews have been well and liberally treated they have been the most loyal and helpful members of the nation." But Hitler goes on with his destruction unmoved. The new press code destroys every vestige of journalistic liberty, makes of journalism the merest prostitute of the government. Indeed, the decree goes so far that anyone found with a copy of the *Manchester Guardian* or the New York *Nation*, or any other forbidden literature, may be sent to jail for not less than fifteen years, or even sentenced to death. This by the man who claims to represent a superior culture, racial purity, and civilization! Why question the atrocity stories that come out of Germany? Anyone who will decree laws like that must regard the murder of an individual as a pleasant interlude.

DESPITE all the discouragements of the hour, the cause of peace remains vital and progressive. Here we have the British Labor Party in convention assembled taking the most advanced position possible—that it will not participate in war hereafter, and that if necessary it will adopt the general strike to prevent hostilities. When it is considered that in advocating a general strike the party is proposing to do something now forbidden by law in England, the courage of this action is most striking. More than that, the party de-

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manded the total disarmament of all nations and the creation of an international police force, and asked the present British government to recede from its preposterous position on air bombing and to submit proposals at Geneva for the general abolition of all arms denied to Germany, for the abolition of military aircraft, for international control of civil aviation, and for the supervision of the execution of the disarmament treaty. This action is all the more remarkable because of the threat of Hitlerism to the peace of Europe. The party conference also voted formally to boycott Nazi Germany, and to raise relief funds for German refugees and to offer them hospitality. The man who introduced the anti-war general-strike resolution was Sir Charles Trevelyan. In New York, too, there have been most encouraging meetings as a result of the anti-war congress, and a new organization has been founded to be a mass force in the peace field.

IT BECOMES increasingly evident that those who hope for some semblance of a new deal for New York City in the near future can achieve it only through the election of Fiorello H. LaGuardia. The McKee wing of the Tammany machine is, if anything, the more dangerous to the prospects of municipal reconstruction. It is drawing to itself the support of the more reactionary bankers and of other tories who are thoroughly tolerant of lesser graft if their own privileges remain secure. Thus Albert Ottinger, the former Republican State Attorney-General, announces his support of Mr. McKee, saying: "You are no incoherent will-o'-the-wisp radical, ready to destroy and absorb property with which the municipality has no concern." This obviously is a thrust at Mr. LaGuardia, and implies Mr. Ottinger's alarm lest Mr. LaGuardia move, in so far as it lies in the Mayor's power, to break the local strangle-hold of the public utilities, whose faithful servant Mr. Ottinger has been. Identifying Mr. LaGuardia as a radical should frighten no one; indeed, it constitutes the most valid reason for supporting him. Only a radical change and a radical policy can satisfy New York City's needs. The sole weakness of the LaGuardia ticket is that, being a product of compromise, it includes candidates who may not sympathize whole-heartedly with the drastic reforms that are imperative if the city is to be saved.

IN THE DEATH of Morris Hillquit the country has lost a foremost—in some ways *the* foremost—figure in the development of socialism in America in this century. Eugene V. Debs, in his lifetime, overshadowed Mr. Hillquit in popular appeal, and in recent years Norman Thomas has become more prominent as a speaker and campaigner. But all the while Mr. Hillquit had a secure place in the inner councils, where his abilities were especially valuable. For it was as a student and thinker, a molder of policies and strategy, that his forte lay rather than as a popular propagandist, although his books on socialism have been widely circulated. Mr. Hillquit was an immigrant boy from Riga who worked his way up by sheer intellectual force. When, a generation ago, he ran for Congress from New York City, he drew to his support an important following of liberals, who hitherto had held aloof from socialism as something too doctrinaire and foreign for American consumption, but his greatest services were reserved for the war years. He was a power in inducing the Socialist Party to oppose America's entry into the World War, and polled nearly 150,000 votes as an anti-war candidate for Mayor of New York City in 1917. In 1932 he received 250,000 votes for the same office, the largest Socialist vote ever cast in the city. As a lawyer he assisted in many important labor cases. The tragedy of Mr. Hillquit's career was his inability to take a sympathetic attitude toward Soviet Russia. This narrowed his vision and activities in his last years, and contributed to the gulf which split socialism into two parties and has weakened the radical movement in America ever since.

A HALF-PAGE ADVERTISEMENT, signed by Samuel Untermyer as president of the American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights, was refused by three New York morning newspapers—the *Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, and the *American*. This strange declination by dailies whose major revenue is derived from advertising bears some relation to the fact that the advertisement was a reply to a full-page advertisement by R. H. Macy and Company published in the New York dailies the previous day. Mr. Untermyer's statement, in the form of an open letter to Percy S. Straus, president of R. H. Macy and Company, challenged the accuracy and the sincerity of some of the statements contained in Macy's advertisement. Reasons given to *The Nation* by the newspapers for their action vary. Yet their refusal to publish even as paid advertising a statement from a man of the standing of Mr. Untermyer, who could be held liable for any libelous material therein contained, constitutes a unique and flagrant suppression. If the local daily press does not reconsider its decision, *The Nation*, deeming the matter of public concern, purposes to publish (without pay) Mr. Untermyer's advertisement, together with the accompanying correspondence between him and Mr. Straus, in its next issue.

WE REGRET to announce that Henry Hazlitt is leaving the staff of *The Nation*. During his four years with us Mr. Hazlitt has contributed many valuable articles on literary and financial subjects, and we hope to continue to publish some of his work. He is to become the editor of the *American Mercury* to succeed H. L. Mencken, perhaps the most outstanding personality among contemporary American editors, for whom, with George Jean Nathan, the magazine was founded ten years ago. Mr. Nathan severed his connection with it some time since, but the publication remained unique among the so-called "quality" magazines by virtue of its strong individuality. Few periodicals have ever achieved a more clearly defined character than the *Mercury* has by centering its attention upon the more grotesque aspects of the American scene and by developing a group of writers whose attitude and literary manner marked them rather definitely as disciples of one or the other of the editors. Inevitably it will be said that the *Mercury*, as Mr. Mencken developed it, belonged to the pre-depression era, and to a certain extent this is true. But of it one must add—as Max Beerbohm once said of himself—that "to be outmoded is to be a classic, if one has written well." Mr. Mencken turns to fresh woods, but there can be no doubt that his *Mercury* made its mark and will be remembered. We wish both him and his successor the best of luck in their new endeavors. Meanwhile we are happy to announce that Joseph Wood Krutch will be *The Nation's* literary editor, continuing also his dramatic criticism.

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A Hard Winter Ahead

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S recent emphasis on succor to the needy is a gratifying assurance that the federal government is not hiding behind the NRA and its possible alleviations while ignoring definite indications of widespread want in the winter ahead. At the same time the full responsibilities of the situation seem not to be adequately faced by Washington, much less by a large number of the States and municipalities of the country. To a large extent private relief organizations have thrown up their hands, appalled at the magnitude of the job, while States and municipalities—crippled with debts and decreased revenues—are unable to meet the crisis.

Yet relief workers generally predict that the coming winter will be the most desperate of the depression. Granting that 3,000,000 unemployed may have returned to work since last spring, it is equally true that four or five times that number are still without employment. Harry L. Hopkins, Federal Emergency Relief Administrator, estimates that a million fewer families are receiving public relief now than last March, but he admits that there are 3,530,000 families still on relief rolls, numbering 15,850,000 persons, about 6,000,000 of whom are children. It is doubtful, he thinks, if more than one in ten ever before asked assistance of the public. What makes the situation doubly serious is that although the number of persons on relief rolls has decreased somewhat, this does not in all cases mean less want and suffering. It is sometimes a result of the hard necessity of reducing the number assisted. For even where a larger total sum of money has been expended, the increasing cost of relief for each individual has been so marked that fewer persons have been included in the distribution. A total of $61,000,000 was spent in public relief throughout the country in August, as compared with $60,000,000 in July, but 3,480,000 families were helped in July and only 3,360,000 in August. In some instances the greater expenditures per person reflect a better standard of support, but to a considerable extent they have been imperative because of the higher cost of food, more sickness, and a dwindling of the last personal resources of those receiving assistance.

The federal government still has $3,300,000 left of the relief fund appropriated by Congress, and Mr. Hopkins thinks that about as much again is available among States and municipalities. This sounds like a good deal of money, but is not calculated to go far among 16,000,000 needy persons. Besides which, as the fifth winter of the depression confronts us, an increased number of persons have used up their last savings, worn out their stock of clothes, and exhausted the generosity of relatives and friends. Considering all these facts, funds available for relief of the needy are woefully inadequate and at best only a soup-kitchen approach to the problem of unemployment. A nation which goes on spending millions for military preparations has done nothing substantial as yet toward unemployment insurance or special taxation of the well-to-do.

The need of relief varies, of course, in different localities. Cleveland seems to be hard hit. Last year the number of applications for relief decreased each week from August 1 to September 1. This year there were 493 applications in the first week of August, 536 in the second, 615 in the third, and 628 in the fourth. Conditions in New York City, where it is estimated a million normally employed persons are without work, are notoriously deplorable. The index of factory employment in the city for August was 63.4, eight and a half points above that for the same month last year, but pay rolls were 50.5, only four and a half points higher than a year ago. In contrast to the country as a whole, where both the total and the average expenditure per family have increased lately, New York City has witnessed a cruel reduction both in the total sum of money spent and in the allotment for each family. As stated by the Welfare Council:

> The peak of public expenditure during the present calendar year for emergency work and home relief (exclusive of relief to the aged, to mothers with dependent children, and to veterans) occurred in June, when approximately 193,000 families in this city received $6,800,000. From June to August 12,000 fewer families were cared for and the expenditure declined a million dollars. This in the face of the fact that even when relief expenditures were at their height many thousands needing relief did not receive it. But the gross figures tell only a part of the story. The highest monthly average relief given to a family was in the month of February and amounted to $39, while in August it had dropped to $23. This is barely enough to keep body and soul together. It leaves nothing for rent, with the inevitable result that evictions have increased at an alarming rate. The city marshals reported that they had evicted 1,257 families in August as compared with 420 evictions in August a year ago. Of these, 675 were on the rolls of the Home Relief Bureau.

In addition to diminishing public expenditures in New York City, private relief agencies are able to do less. The Gibson committee, the Emergency Work Bureau of which formerly provided thousands with employment, has disbanded, and a campaign for funds will not be made this autumn. The Emergency Work Bureau is closing its work-relief pay roll, which amounted in August to $300,000.

The city administration has been advised not to place too much reliance on increased employment even if it becomes substantial. Experience has shown that those on relief rolls are the last to be reemployed. The niggardly allowance for food under the city's home-relief system is becoming ever more pitiful as prices rise. Food that could be purchased in March for 96 cents now costs $1.10, and a further rise in prices is expected. The Welfare Council says it is convinced that the gross monthly expenditure for work and home relief, which now fluctuates around $6,500,000, should be increased to a minimum of $10,000,000 and should be available for six months.

As the Welfare Council well put it, the "complete and utter inadequacy of relief, due to insufficient appropriations, is indefensible as a matter of right and justice to those who are in need, and it is shocking to the humane instincts of this community, which would never tolerate such inhumanity if the facts were known and fully appreciated."

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Stabilize Now!

THE time has arrived when the Administration ought no longer to postpone a definite declaration of its monetary policy. In recent weeks the dollar has been sinking—at the time of writing it is at a discount of more than 35 per cent from parity—but this decline is no longer accompanied, as in its early stages, by advances in the prices of farm products and securities or by a rising volume of production. On the contrary, many of the recent breaks in the dollar have been accompanied by actual declines in the prices of the farmers' output, and there has been a continued downward turn in basic production and business activity since the middle of July, though on mere seasonal grounds there should have been a sharp advance. The New York *Times* weekly business index, for example, compiled from statistics of freight car loadings, steel-mill capacity, electric-power, automobile, and lumber production, and cotton forwardings, rose from 60 per cent of a hypothetical "normal" in March of this year to nearly 100 per cent in mid-July, reaching the highest point since the middle of 1930. Since then the index has turned just as sharply downward, canceling more than half of the early gain.

It is significant that this record corresponds rather closely to that of Great Britain when it abandoned the gold standard two years ago. For about three months there was a sharp rise in securities and commodities at wholesale, with a sharp improvement in sentiment and some improvement in activity; but when the pound's brief honeymoon with depreciation was over, prices began to sag again, activity to fall off, and confidence once more to give way to uneasiness. Now that we have ourselves passed through a similar cycle it ought to be clear to everyone that there is no merit in mere depreciation. On the contrary, the uncertainty regarding the dollar's future, the daily fluctuations in its international value, affect business plans everywhere; men cannot act with confidence in undertaking any fundamental capital improvements or making any large capital purchases when they do not know what the dollar will be worth one year from today. Foreign trade, in particular, has sunk nearly to its lowest level, for importers, exporters, or a special speculative class must undertake daily and monthly risks when the major currencies change daily in relation to each other. This choking of foreign trade does not merely reduce the volume of total trade by the percentage directly involved in international commerce; it upsets the entire delicate economic equilibrium of the world. Even the supposed "advantages" of a depreciated currency in reducing imports and expanding exports are mythical. In August, the month for which the latest figures are available, the United States showed the greatest excess of imports over exports—or what in popular parlance is called an "unfavorable balance of trade"—for any month in seven years.

Nothing can cure this situation but certainty and confidence regarding the future of the dollar. There must be a return, at the earliest possible moment, to gold convertibility at a fixed rate. It is now generally admitted that this rate cannot be the old parity either for the pound or for the dollar. An attempt to restore this not only would lead to heavy raids once more on the gold supply by a people which has suffered from economic shell shock but, what is much more important, would involve a downward plunge in the prices of farm products and raw materials that the farmers and basic producers could not stand and would not permit. What is called for is a return to gold convertibility at a level close to the present depreciation; certainly final devaluation should not in any case be greater than 40 per cent.

And it is of the highest importance that this return to gold should be made in cooperation with Great Britain. That the two currencies should in future bear an easily calculable gold relationship to each other—in place of the old clumsy 4.8665—is desirable; but what is of first concern is that each country should know exactly what the other's ultimate level is going to be, and that the announcements should be simultaneous. It is not necessary that gold convertibility begin immediately after these announcements have been made. It is merely necessary that a definite date be fixed—say, January 1, 1935—for such convertibility to become effective. A joint announcement of this nature should lead to an immediate increase of world confidence, for it would mean that real confidence had returned to the governments of the world's two leading economic countries. Such an action is the only one that can put a halt to the present pressure for the printing of fiat money, a course the mere suggestion of which is already causing the gravest uneasiness, and which could only end in disaster.

Easy Money

HOW Dillon, Read and Company stretched an original investment of $5,100,000 in their United States and Foreign Securities Corporation into control of $90,000,000 of invested funds of other people's money was among the recent revelations before the Senate Banking and Currency Committee. Clarence Dillon's further procedure in creating an equity of $54,000,000 for himself and his partners out of nothing was another illustration of the legerdemain which in the vanished heyday was a characteristic performance of our financial leaders. It is typical of their method of securing the ground-floor position through the capital facilities cheerfully offered by a gullible and likewise acquisitive-minded public. An investment trust such as the United States and Foreign Securities Corporation is at best an enterprise of no social value. It contributes nothing toward the financing of industry and merely offers the public the supposed expert guidance of investment bankers in the handling of its money. The management of such a trust should, at most, be entitled to a fee or a reasonable percentage of the profits, although for most of the investors there were no profits—only losses. But in the Dillon, Read trust, the management cornered 75 per cent of the common stock in return for a common-stock investment of only $5,100,000, and later saw this equity mount to a market value of $54,000,000, a sum which far outshadowed the equity of the public which had contributed the bulk of the funds.

Mr. Dillon nevertheless insisted to the Senate committee that the role of his firm with this trust and with the affiliated $60,000,000 United States and International Securities (which it also controlled without any further investment) was only "to manage for the public. It was no ad-

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vantage to us. We have never received anything on it." Ever altruists, ever public servants, these bankers! However, aside from the immense profits made possible by his firm's position with respect to the common stock, it is difficult to believe that there is no connection between the directorships held by Dillon, Read in various important corporations and the large investments in these companies held by the two trusts, or between the two trusts' ownership of 49,000 shares of Rock Island stock and the recent appointment of Dillon, Read as one of the reorganization managers of that road, or between the 58,610 shares of Chase Bank stock held by the two trusts and the cordial relations existing between Dillon, Read and the Rockefeller institution.

Whether the banking inquiry has been dealt a serious blow by the luring of Mr. Pecora from his important investigation to become the candidate for the District Attorneyship of New York on the McKee ticket remains to be seen. This is not a new procedure on the part of Tammany. It performed a similar feat of excision on Senator Hofstadter when it drew him away from the Seabury forces by offering him a judgeship. The McKee wing of Tammany is obviously in cahoots with some of the bankers. Mr. Pecora has long yearned to be District Attorney, and cannot be too severely criticized for yielding to this temptation, although we believe his decision unwise and unfortunate. The blame rests squarely on Postmaster-General Farley and indirectly on President Roosevelt for failing to call a halt to Mr. Farley's activities in behalf of his Tammany faction. How welcome the possible withdrawal of Mr. Pecora would be to the banking fraternity may be gauged from Clarence Dillon's undisguised warmth in congratulating him. As the Washington *Daily News* pointed out: "Mr. Dillon's congratulations came straight from the heart. As one of the 'solid elements' whose support Mr. McKee is seeking, he no doubt felt much more solid the moment he heard the news."

Thomas Mann Looks On

THOMAS MANN, besides being the exquisite historian of "life's delicate children," is also a philosophical observer of the social, political, and economic phenomena of his time. Yet Mann, who has been sometimes pamphleteer and journalist, has never been seduced by the alarms, the hysterias, the inchoate passions of the temporal. Always he has managed to put the present emergency in its right relation to the past and to what he believes to be the onward-moving march of culture and civilization. As a humanist—not of course of the recent American variety but in the great Renaissance tradition—he has tried to see everything in his time *sub specie aeternitatis*. And to the horrible emergency now existing in his native country it is natural that he should make a response which not only relates it properly to the past but also reasserts man's still stubborn hope for "a free and conscious humanity."

In many respects his article on Freud in the current *Criterion* is the most profoundly devastating dismissal of the Hitler regime that has yet been made. It is devastating not only because Mann pays the Nazis the supreme insult of never once mentioning them by name but also because the position in history to which he assigns them is just the opposite of what they claim for themselves. He explains their "progress" as retrogression, their revolution as reaction, their forward-moving pose as something motivated by an "obscurantist, fanatic, and backward-shaping spirit." The revolutionary idea, he declares, we are used to associate "with the powers of light, with the emancipation of the understanding, and with conceptions looking future-wards, whereas here the leading is in just the opposite direction. Backwards, is the cry; back into the night, the sacred primitive, the foreknown, the life-bearing; backwards into the romantical, prehistorical mother-womb."

In a brilliant analysis Mann makes us understand that the Nazi psychology comes out of a belated romanticism, with a dynamic of passion, the irrational and the unconscious, seeking in the primitive "folk-idea" a justification of its essential defeatism. His particular purpose is to exonerate Freud from the responsibility of being the chief inspirer of this movement back to "mindless nature, the folk-soul, hatred, war." He laments the fact that Freud's probings into the unconscious, which were intended to help men understand themselves better, should be used by some of them as an excuse for indulging in excesses of nationalistic passion.

"And youth? Is it really going to fall victim to this crude abuse of our new knowledge of the depths of mind committed by our mind-haters? It seems so. Or rather, it seems so at some times and in some places. We are no longer strangers to the disheartening sight of youthful bodies in gay quick-step, songs issuing from young lips, arms flung up in a Roman salute, wasting the fine flight of their youth upon hoary ideas. The confusion must mount, if youth goes on lending its biological charms to age and the evils of age." The great humanist refuses to accept such a situation. "But it is only an apparent confusion, an ephemeral illusion. The evils of age will not become good and beautiful because youth puts them on; would not become so if the tragedy came to pass that youth shed its blood for them. Such errors and misconceptions cannot stand; they are predestined to be called to order and set aside."

Against all this Thomas Mann sets what he calls the true revolutionary principle: "The name of revolution belongs only to the will that leads future-wards by the path of consciousness and resolution. This is what youth must be told today. No teaching or incitement to the great 'Back! back!' no zeal for the past for its own sake, can write the word upon its banner save for the open end of confusion." The true revolutionary principle is one of "consciousness and recognition, leading to higher levels; the will and the urge to destroy . . . all the premature apparent harmonies and pseudo-perfections of life; and by analysis, by psychology, through phases of solution which, from the point of view of cultural unity, must be designated as anarchy but in which there is no pause and no retreat, no restoration, no tenable standing ground, to break a path to a free and genuine unity of existence, secured by conscious possession, to the culture of men developed to complete self-consciousness."

These are the words not of the rhetorician, the detached philosophical mind, but of a man who has been driven from his home, whose works have been burned in the marketplace, whose name has been made anathema to a whole generation of his countrymen. Germany has need of such words at this hour—and she should be proud of them. But she has probably not been allowed even to hear them.

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Issues and Men

An Open Letter to Governor Lehman

DEAR GOVERNOR LEHMAN: Where do you stand? What position are you going to take in this municipal election? Are you going to sit on the fence? Are you going to stand by Tammany Hall again? Or are you going to place yourself on the side of decent government in New York and join the forces which are trying to redeem this practically bankrupt city from the worst kind of exploitation, corruption, and misgovernment? That this is a crisis in our city's history no one knows better than you, for you have had to spend many exhausting hours as a mediator between the bankers who are now its dictators and the city officials who are so largely responsible for the municipality's distress. Moreover, as the Executive of the Empire State you are well aware of the close connection between city and State and nation, and of the effect upon the national morale and the government's recovery program of a smashing reform victory in the metropolis. You will not, I am sure, deny that just now nothing would help the city more than taking it out of the hands of those who have so degraded it.

Where do you stand, Governor, at this time when no patriot has the right to refuse to tell whom he is for and what he is against? Do you wish it to be said all over this country that in this emergency the head of the Empire State found no time to decide between the forces of evil and the forces working to instal in New York City a government in the interest of the plain people, one million of whom are being kept alive by private and public charity through no fault of their own? You certainly will not claim that you are not a citizen of New York, for you live on the finest residential street in Manhattan. Here you were born, here you have lived before and since manhood, and here you made your very considerable fortune. Here 1,531,165 men and women voted to elect you Governor. You owe it to them, yes, to the entire city, to state whether you favor McKee, or LaGuardia, or O'Brien again. You will not, I believe, seek to step out of your role as a citizen of Manhattan, or declare that the Governor should not take sides in a local election. That argument is valid when made in behalf of the President of the United States. It does not hold good when applied to the Governor at Albany, for the city of New York all but dominates the legislature and often exercises a controlling influence in the affairs of the State. No Governor can live up to his responsibilities, not even in normal times, and ignore what is going on at the southern end of the State; no Governor can be indifferent to what is happening to one-half the entire population of this commonwealth. What happens in any other city in New York is insignificant in comparison. Surely it is not necessary to remind you of this.

But you will not use that argument to excuse silence for the simple reason that just a year ago you took sides in a mayoralty election. When the present Mayor, O'Brien, who is little else than a joke, was nominated, you sent him the following telegram:

> I want to congratulate you very heartily on your nomination, and I wish you success on November 8 by an overwhelming vote. I look forward with great pleasure to meeting you frequently during the campaign. Kindest regards to you and your family.

When you sent that wire you made it perfectly plain that you felt that at least a candidate for Governor of this State had a right and a duty to intervene in a mayoralty contest. Now what some of the 1,531,165 voters of New York City who cast their ballots for you wish to know is whether you still think that John P. O'Brien is worthy of "an overwhelming vote"; whether you are still for him; whether you desire his reelection. If so, they will know exactly where to place you.

They certainly did not count you a Tammany man a year ago. They agreed with *The Nation's* estimate of you—made before your O'Brien telegram—as one who had "steadfastly refused to play politics" and had been "an admirable public officer." They were little concerned then with your stand on the local issues, for the election of last fall was a hasty affair and you yourself were a candidate for office. But they do care now—earnestly and sincerely. They feel that they have the right today to look to you for civic leadership just because you hold the highest position in the State, and a good and just Governor is often the leader of the State's public opinion. They will not believe, and cannot be made to believe, that you are going to support Tammany Hall this year until you yourself convince them. They do not wish to believe that you have become so much the politician in the period of a single year that you will choose the cowardly course of sitting upon the fence. They credit you with far more than enough common sense and political sagacity to know that the public will respect you only if you take an open and unequivocal stand—a stand for someone, somewhere. They will refuse to believe—unless you convince them to the contrary—that you will be actuated in this emergency by any questions of expediency, or by any thought of how your position will affect your chances for reelection next year, until you teach them otherwise.

Where do you stand, Herbert Lehman? Under which flag, Governor? This mayoralty election will profoundly affect the destinies, perhaps the lives, of a multitude of desperate American men, women, and children. You are of a race that knows what it is to suffer and be outcast—unhappily it knows it better today than for generations past. Do you not feel for the economic victims in New York? Will you deny your heart and your better instincts and ally yourself with the powers of darkness? I, for one, refuse to believe it.

Sincerely yours,

Oswald Garrison Villard

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The Dilemma of the Supreme Court

Will It Find the NRA and the AAA Unconstitutional?

By MAURICE FINKELSTEIN

ON the fourth of March the business life of this country came as near to complete collapse as it has ever come in the whole history of the republic. Out of that fateful crisis emerged the momentous political and economic experiment of Roosevelt's New Deal, which was enacted by Congress in two great pieces of legislation—the Agricultural Adjustment Act and the National Industrial Recovery Act. The former attempts to raise agricultural prices and the farmers' purchasing power by the simple device of a government subsidy to farmers who will agree to restrict output, the subsidy to be defrayed by a tax on urban consumers. Since this plan, taken by itself, is a case of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, the Industrial Recovery Act was designed to grapple with the far more crucial and difficult problem of raising the prosperity of the industrial Peter. On the basis of business codes to be prepared by the industries themselves or to be imposed, if necessary, by the government, it seeks to restore prosperity by raising wages and increasing employment, encouraging collective bargaining, fixing prices, controlling production, and in general eliminating all forms of socially wasteful cutthroat competition.

Disguise it as one may, the New Deal involves, both by its immediate commitments and by the commitments which are bound to follow, a revolutionary departure in national economic policy. Although it employs great caution and indirection, it has launched the country on the road which leads to a politically planned and regulated economic life, not altogether unlike that of Communist Russia or Fascist Italy.

At once the question arises: But what about the Supreme Court and the Constitution? This question, which is instinctively raised every time Congress or a State legislature passes a piece of forward-looking legislation, has in this context an all-pervading importance. Will this court, which through the dominant conservative majority has blocked, for more than a generation, all reform efforts to curb business greed and give labor even a superficial measure of social protection, and which in fact has enshrined the business man's laissez faire philosophy in the Constitution—will this court now accept the revolution of the New Deal?

The answer to our question, which is even more fateful than the vision which planned the New Deal, may be clearly and categorically stated. If the New Deal continues to command its present popular support, the Supreme Court will be powerless to block it. Instead of the court putting the New Deal into eclipse, it will rather be the New Deal which will put into permanent eclipse the economic dictatorship of the court.

This prognostication is not based upon any hidden resources of constitutional ingenuity utilized by the framers of the legislation to forestall a veto by the august tribunal; on the contrary, many of the provisions of the legislation seem to go clearly against the weight of accumulated judicial precedents and policy—and yet such is the constellation of political forces that the Supreme Court will find itself powerless to arrest the disputed legislation. Of the two sets of enactments, the Agricultural Adjustment Act raises comparatively simple constitutional questions. But the Industrial Recovery Act, precisely because it is the fulcrum of the whole plan, has to regulate business, or in other words take away property in the form of individual opportunities for profit; and this goes clearly into the domain of property rights, the protection of which the Supreme Court has arrogated to itself by decisions of the past forty years.

This whole vast plan of a controlled national economy, with regulation reaching into every crevice of economic life, depends for its general constitutional authority on the extremely narrow base of the power of Congress "to regulate commerce with foreign nations and between the States" (unless the hitherto dormant "general welfare" clause of the Constitution can be suddenly called into play). The court has held, however, in two successive decisions dealing with the attempts of Congress to prohibit child labor in manufacturing (first through its power over interstate commerce and second through its power to tax), that the conditions of manufacturing were a domestic matter for the States, in which Congress had no power to interfere. On the other hand, even should the court in its graciousness concede jurisdiction to Congress over all phases of industry and commerce, both local and national, the types of concrete regulations which the act authorizes—hours of labor, wages, prices, and output—have been repeatedly thrown out as unreasonable when imposed by the States and the nation in their respective fields, except in the narrowly delimited field of railroad and public-utility regulation. And even in that field the court has set itself up as the final power which shall determine what particular rates and restrictions are reasonable and what are not.

In addition, the delicacy of the recovery plan makes it imperative that it should be administered by executive agencies with a full coordination of all its phases. This renders abortive the prediction of those Machiavellian interpreters who suggest that the court might sustain the act but whittle away its effectiveness by interpretation of specific codes. Similarly, the often-made suggestion that the court might sustain the recovery act as an emergency measure overlooks the important consideration that while the depression may be temporary, its cure, once undertaken by the methods of the New Deal, will involve a permanent change in our economic policy. Anyone who thinks that the emergency behind the recovery act will soon pass is gravely mistaken, for if the law is at all successful, not only will its duration be extended, but its application to the economic life of the country will doubtless tend to be intensified rather than diminished. So that while Congress enacted this statute in the form of emergency legislation—no doubt to make it more palatable to the court—nevertheless, it is perfectly plain that that prop is insecure and can afford no permanent support to the constitutionality of the New Deal. In short, if we are to go by the point of view

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expressed in many of the past decisions and articulated past policies of the court, the Industrial Recovery Act would have as much chance to pass through the Supreme Court as a camel through the eye of a needle.

And yet the Supreme Court will in all probability find it difficult to throw out the Industrial Recovery Act as unconstitutional. For if it should do so, the popular resentment would be so great and the need of action so uppermost that no one would be surprised if Congress and the President should utilize the power, which they always have in reserve, of "packing" the court—that is to say, of appointing additional justices to secure a favorable majority for the act. The court has been packed before—at the time of the legal-tender cases in the seventies—and it can be packed again. Moreover, under the present alignment of the court, with three justices to be counted in all probability on the liberal side of allowing the legislative will to express itself unhindered by the judiciary, the packing would be a relatively simple matter. And if packing were not sufficient, or if it were desired to make the legislative policy permanently secure against judicial encroachment, a constitutional amendment could be submitted to the people, so clearly worded as to take away forever the power of the court to declare this and similar legislation unconstitutional. This latter proposal has been urged upon the country for a number of years. A judicial declaration against the validity of the recovery act would certainly add great impetus and perhaps be the necessary immediate cause to effectuate the reform.

Thus, in the last analysis, the National Industrial Recovery Act puts the Supreme Court between the horns of a dilemma, so that, whichever way it chooses, it must contemplate the approaching curtailment, at least on major questions of industrial and economic policy, of its arrogated power to legislate—or rather to checkmate and prevent legislation—on economic policy.

The New Deal has been called a "silent revolution" in American politics. But if it is this, the true revolution, at least in the political aspects of the New Deal, lies not so much in the steps taken as in the reconquest of the right of the general will to grapple intelligently with the public destiny, and to tackle, before it is too late, the vast problems which a century of unregulated and unplanned business enterprise has heaped up on the community. Instead of going forward with the solution of these new problems before they piled up in a revolutionary manner, political thought in the United States has stood pat on its doctrine of natural rights and laissez faire.

It is wrong to single out the courts and the Constitution as a scapegoat for social ills resulting from this stagnation of thought, for in the last analysis its development was part of the whole social process. But at the same time we must realize that not only did the court use its powers of mechanical obstruction to the utmost; it actively stretched the Constitution backwards and forwards in order to uphold vested private interests. The chief instrument by which this was accomplished was the famous "due process" clause. While in the early cases arising under this clause, like the slaughterhouse case of Louisiana (1873) and *Munn* v. *Illinois* (1877), at the time of the "granger revolt," the court itself disavowed the prerogative of interfering with legislative action, a different judicial attitude was soon apparent. In 1897, with the decision in the case of *Allgeyer* v. *Louisiana,* the court was ready to hold that a particular scheme of regulating the insurance business was invalid because it deprived the appellant of property without due process of law. Shortly thereafter a series of railroad rate cases was decided which definitely established the supremacy of the Supreme Court in rate-making.

By these and subsequent decisions the preeminence of the court in almost all fields of industrial and social legislation has become firmly established. Mr. Justice Brandeis has pointed out in his notable dissent in the Oklahoma ice case that this result is traceable to the holding by the Supreme Court that due process applies "to matters of substantive law as well as to matters of procedure." The process by which it is suggested that the court should avoid the dire consequences of this holding suggests the laws of the Medes and the Persians, wherein it was provided that no edict sealed by the king's signet ring could be changed except by a new circumventing edict. Justice Brandeis suggests that the court keep due process but apply standards of rationality so bold and brave as not to shut out any legislative experimentation that looks at all promising.

It is true that the anti-trust laws had been upheld as constitutional by the Supreme Court, but the philosophy back of the anti-trust act was antiquarian in its tendency. It looked backwards to the golden age of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth, through whose aura competition appeared free, fair, and equal; blind to the intrinsic development of capitalist production, it had operated like a law of gravitation to concentrate business in fewer and fewer hands and to give the larger aggregations of capital a dynamic advantage over the smaller ones. But despite the backwardness of its philosophy, the anti-trust law, had it been vigorously enforced, would have led experimentally at least to a more adequate perception of what was required. And in any case it would have checked the more flagrant abuses of economic power. It is characteristic, however, of the whole American social process from the nineties until the present that the feebleness of the law's philosophy and the irresoluteness of the enforcing agencies were matched only by the vigor with which the Supreme Court protected the corporations' interests against the law. Right at the outset, in 1895, the court declared that the sugar trust was out of reach of the law, since its business was manufacturing, and manufacturing was done inside of State lines. Zeno's paradoxes of motion were thus pressed into the service of the vested interests!

It is true that this doctrine had to be modified in subsequent decisions, but the court had the reserve weapon of determining when a combination or a restraint of trade was "reasonable." By this means, as Justice Brandeis wrote in one of his dissenting opinions, "the Sherman law was held in *United States* v. *United States Steel Corporation* to permit capitalists to combine in a single corporation 50 per cent of the steel industry of the United States, dominating the trade through its vast resources. The Sherman law was held in *United States* v. *United Shoe Machinery Company* to permit capitalists to combine in another corporation practically the whole shoe-machinery industry of the country, necessarily giving it a position of dominance over shoe manufacturing in America." But when it came to a labor boycott—the attempt of "members of a small craft of workmen . . . to cooperate in simply refraining from work when that course was the only means of self-protection against a

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combination of militant and powerful employers"—the court declared that this was an unreasonable restraint of trade, and the fact that everything was done within State lines was of no avail.

In some of the cases dealing with railroad rates and other utility regulation the court has, indeed, allowed a certain latitude in the meaning of "due process," when that latitude was for once in the interest of the social good, and it is these cases which are put forward by constitutional lawyers as a reason why the court may declare the National Industrial Recovery Act to be within the scope of Congressional authority. But by this time it should be evident that it is not a question of what the Constitution and the precedents permit the court to do—the Constitution and the precedents permit the court to do practically anything it pleases. The real question is the economic bias of a majority of the members of the court, which is the only thread that allows the historian to guide his way through the tortuous labyrinth of its decisions.

From the point of view of bias, it may be said that on the matter of price regulation—one of the prime objects of the recovery act—the predominant view of the court has been illustrated not only by the cases already cited but by the Tyson theater price-fixing case of 1927. There the majority of the court, speaking through Justice Sutherland, declared:

> If it be within the legitimate authority of government to fix maximum charges for admission to theaters . . . and every possible form of amusement, including the lowly merry-go-round with its adjunct the hurdy-gurdy, it is hard to see where the limit of power in respect of price-fixing is to be drawn.

Well, the scope of the recovery act includes the hurdy-gurdy and everything else. And as far as the question of emergency is concerned, it is a fact that on March 21, 1932, at the very height of the depression, the court outlawed a State system of licensing such as the recovery act contemplates, and it outlawed it not because the State had no jurisdiction but because the particular regulation was unreasonable under the Fourteenth Amendment.

The lifting of labor standards, by fixing hours of labor and minimum wages, outlawing yellow-dog contracts, and encouraging collective bargaining, is another coordinate objective of the recovery act. And what is the predominant view of the court on this point? In the whole mass of labor cases the only rays of light that stand out are the upholding of Oregon's laws restricting the hours, first of women, and then of men—on the sole ground of their being regulations in the interest of health! (This ground is, of course, not available when a five- or six-hour day is legislated into being.) But against these feeble rays of light stands the Stygian darkness of the court's successive rulings that legislation outlawing yellow-dog contracts was unconstitutional, that anti-injunction legislation was unconstitutional, and finally that minimum-wage legislation for women (and a fortiori for men) was unconstitutional.

And yet with its hostility to reform legislation so cumulatively expressed by the court, it will suddenly have to abdicate its powers of economic censorship. How will this miracle come about and how has its groundwork been prepared? Here the great work of the dissenting minority looms up as of vast importance. A steady flow of minority opinions from the hands of Holmes and Brandeis, and more recently of Stone and Cardozo, points the road to the true position of the court in American political life—to the restoration of the scheme of things contemplated by the framers of the Constitution. The court will become again a needed check on legislative excess and will permanently relinquish its right to act as a superlegislature. Mr. Justice Holmes has many times reiterated this view, pointing out that the agreement or disagreement of particular judges with any legislative policy "has nothing to do with the right of the majority to embody their opinions in law."

This presents the court with a real opportunity to assume that role of leadership for which it was created and to fulfil, by sound decisions, the economic and political aims which have brought about the "silent revolution."

Something snapped in American life in the winter of 1932-33. That something is the arrogant confidence of business that it can run its own show. If there were space here, it would be interesting to trace the direct and remote causes of this transformation. The unexampled depression, the example of Russia, half menacing and half seducing, the truly remarkable leadership of Roosevelt and his Administration, half a century of agitation for reform—all these contributed their share. But whatever the causes, the fact is that the revolution is here—the program of the New Deal was actually framed and allowed to be put through Congress. Granted the contexture of conditions which made this revolution possible, a revolution in the Supreme Court is bound to follow as a matter of course.

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New Labor Leaders Needed

The A. F. of L. and Its Racketeers

By HAROLD SEIDMAN

THE American labor movement is in greater need of honest and progressive leadership at the present time than it has ever been in the past. The power and prestige of organized labor in the United States, which have been declining rapidly in the past few years, have been revived by the National Recovery Act, but the hope that this act offers cannot be realized unless the racketeers who despotically rule many unions are driven out. Most American workmen do not trust unions, and the thousands who have recently been added to union membership lists will break their affiliations rather than be victimized by the labor czars. Unfortunately, the American Federation of Labor has never attempted to clean out the racketeers and has actually encouraged racketeering by its policy of non-interference, though the whole trade-union movement has thereby been brought into disrepute.

New cases and new methods of labor racketeering are uncovered almost daily. United States Attorney George Z. Medalie is now investigating charges that bricklayers working on the new federal building in New York were forced to pay five dollars a week to the union for the privilege of working. Dave Friedman, a former member of the executive committee of the Boot and Shoe Makers' Union, has said he knew "of an instance where an employer volunteered higher wages and the union heads vetoed it." When members become too curious about union affairs, the czars call strikes to unite them and make them forget their other grievances. Opposition groups that go to court are frequently kept embroiled in litigation until their limited resources are exhausted and they are forced to give up the battle. The rank and file in many unions are reduced to dumb submission. Appeals to the federation have been in vain.

Owen S. M. Tierney, who represented Local 125 of the International Union of Operating Engineers in its fight against Patrick J. Commerford, now in prison for violating the income-tax law, received absolutely no cooperation from the federation. Tierney wrote to William Green in 1932 describing the unbearable conditions that existed in Local 125 under the despotic rule of Commerford, who was on the pay roll of several employers and had accepted huge bribes to break and prevent strikes. Green refused to grant Tierney an appointment to see him in Washington, but said his personal representative was in New York making an investigation. Mr. Tierney never saw this representative, and his subsequent letters to Green were unanswered. Despite more than fifteen successive court victories, Local 125 is still battling to have its charter restored. The majority of employers now obtain their workmen from Local 130, the new union set up by the International, as they are unwilling to deal with a local which is not favored by the International for fear that their out-of-town jobs will be tied up. If its funds are not exhausted, Local 125 will ultimately be successful in its fight against the International, whose president, Possehl, is an official of the American Federation of Labor. In the meantime members of Local 125 are experiencing extremely hard times.

William Green could not have been ignorant of the intolerable conditions that existed in Local 306 of the Motion Picture Operators under the tyrannical rule of Sam Kaplan, another convicted labor racketeer, yet he did almost nothing to eradicate the evil. Numerous complaints to the A. F. of L. went unheeded. In appointing receivers for the union, Judge Cotillo wrote:

> The American Federation of Labor was dilatory in protecting the property and working rights of members of Local 306 of the Motion Picture Operators. When organized labor neglects to clean its own house, under its own laws, until conditions become so bad that it finds itself in a court of equity, it must not be surprised to suffer the consequences of its own indifference.

William Green, however, was enraged by the appointment of receivers and declared it "an unjustifiable invasion of the legal and administrative rights of the American Federation of Labor."

In Hudson County, New Jersey, 600 drivers resigned from Local 461 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and Chauffeurs and accused the union officials of racketeering. The drivers announced that they would form a new organization and passed a resolution severely criticizing the American Federation of Labor. They said that all appeals to that body to investigate charges of racketeering and dictatorship in the locals had been ignored. Green said in reply that these men "were affiliated only indirectly with the federation."

The usual excuse offered by the A. F. of L. for its failure to prosecute racketeers is "lack of jurisdiction." However, in some cases Green has found means to overcome this obstacle. In the fur workers' strike of 1926 Mr. Green met Mr. Samuels, president of the employers' association, in Washington and arranged a settlement secretly without consulting either the strikers or their leaders. A meeting of the strikers was then called at Carnegie Hall, at which Green and his lieutenants were to explain to the workers the terms of the settlement and the advisability of accepting them. To make sure that Mr. Green's advice would be followed, the strike leaders were not permitted to enter the hall. Nevertheless, Green was howled down and the men refused to accept the settlement. The terms finally obtained were much more advantageous than those Mr. Green had agreed upon and tried to force upon the workers. Shortly afterward Green appointed a committee to investigate the Fur Workers, and thirty-two officers of the New York locals were expelled. When the locals refused to recognize the expulsions, they were all suspended. The Needle Workers' Industrial Union, with which the A. F. of L. has been waging a violent struggle, grew out of these suspended locals. The federation was not hampered by "lack of jurisdiction" in this case.

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Since unscrupulous employers are always looking for opportunities to attack labor unions, one would expect labor organizations to exercise great care in their choice of officers. But just the opposite has been the case. Many a man has walked out of jail into a high union office with the tacit approval of the high command of the A. F. of L. Though officers of the union spent $19,000 on his defense, William Hogan was convicted of stealing $30,000 from the treasury of Local 3 of the Electrical Workers. Hogan was not expelled from the union, and some time after his release from prison he was elevated to the office of International treasurer, a position which he still occupies. P. J. Morrin, president of the International Union of Iron Workers, was convicted in the notorious MacNamara case. Minor union officials with criminal records are too numerous to mention here. P. J. Commerford will probably get back his old job in the union when he is released from prison.

Joseph Fay, one of the members of the labor triumvirate in New Jersey—the other two, Brandle and Sherlock, have both been expelled from the Iron Workers' Union—was recently appointed by President Possehl International representative of the Operating Engineers in New York City "to preserve the International union's aspirations in formulating and perfecting contractual relationships with associations of contractors and employers." Part owner of the International Excavating Company and International Hoisting Company, Fay had been expelled from the union in June, 1932, because he was an employer, but had been unconditionally reinstated in August; he said at that time that he would "ultimately disassociate himself from the contracting companies." Apparently he did not, for in June last he was charged with conspiracy to control the excavating and trucking business in northern New Jersey for the benefit of companies controlled by him and his associates. Fay is typical of the capitalist labor leaders who have infested American unions in recent years. Time was when a man immediately lost his union card on becoming an employer, but that is so no longer.

Matthew Woll, first vice-president of the A. F. of L., who has distinguished himself in recent years by his bitter opposition to unemployment insurance and to the recognition of Russia, has continually allowed salesmen to exploit his high office to sell policies issued by the Union Labor Insurance Company, of which he is president. Mr. Woll has given this explanation for the formation of his company:

> As a result of our study we realized that the trade unions are all ill-equipped to cope with problems involved in any insurance arrangement. The only sound way to overcome the difficulties presented was to form an insurance company that would be managed on a safe and sound basis. The result was that the Union Labor Insurance Company came into existence for that purpose.

The Union Labor Insurance Company has far exceeded its original purpose, and there is hardly a labor lawyer who has not been approached by one of Woll's insurance salesmen. Sometimes prospective buyers are told that Mr. Woll wants to speak to them on the telephone. An insurance salesman greets them instead of Mr. Woll. One business man, active in the recovery movement, declared he received a telephone call purporting to come from a "Mr. Schwaum of the American Federation of Labor," to the effect that Mr. Woll was returning from Washington and wanted to see him. Assuming that it was an important labor or government matter, the business man canceled all his engagements for the afternoon. Aaron Nadler, an insurance salesman, appeared instead of Mr. Woll, with a letter of introduction signed by the latter. When this case was brought to the attention of Mr. Woll, he said he did not countenance such acts by his salesmen. However, he did not deny that it was his signature on the letter.

Dr. Leo Wolman, now chairman of the Labor Advisory Board of the NRA, wrote that the Amalgamated Union broke off from the United Garment Workers in 1914 because of "autocratic and unrepresentative administration of the [latter] union's business . . . corrupt practices among the officers of the United Garment Workers, and misuse of union funds, particularly in connection with the abuse of the union label." The A. F. of L. has since then continually waged war against the Amalgamated, which is probably the strongest union in the United States today.

Although fewer than 10 per cent of the American workers have until recently been included in the membership of the A. F. of L., the federation has frequently claimed sole ownership of the labor movement in the United States. President Green recently stated that "there is no room in the United States for any other labor movement." The A. F. of L. regards members of independent unions as non-union. Yet many American workers are not able to join A. F. of L. unions because of the stringent admission regulations and high initiation fees. Where can men who have long been unemployed find from $25 to $300 for initiation fees?

The failure of the A. F. of L. does not mean that trade unionism is unsound. Even under corrupt leadership, organized workers have gained benefits which they could not have obtained in any other way. But by permitting racketeering to continue, the A. F. of L. has endangered the cause of all organized labor. Employers are justified when they refuse to deal with these grafters and ex-convicts. No honest employer would protest against collective bargaining if the racketeers were driven out of the unions. That is a problem which General Johnson and his aids who are directing the National Recovery Act cannot evade.

For the first time in history the American government is aiding organized labor. The NRA has abolished the "yellow-dog" contract and guaranteed to every worker the right of collective bargaining. But labor needs more than this. If it is to go forward and prosper it must have new, honest, courageous leaders who can consolidate these gains. The new labor leader must be a man who commands the respect of both the employer and the worker. The American Federation of Labor as it is now organized cannot provide this leadership. The federal government should hold an investigation through one of its agencies to determine why the A. F. of L. and its affiliates, especially in New York, New Jersey, and Chicago, consistently block all efforts to sweep out the czars and their gangsters. Labor should no longer be permitted to stand above the law. After a thorough investigation a code of fair practice should be drawn up for labor unions. The capitalist labor leader, the czar who extorts money from employers and members of the union, the stacked constitutions, the paid gangsters, must all be eliminated. If organized labor in the United States is to survive, it must have a complete New Deal and a complete new leadership.

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The German Nightmare

By ROBERT DELL

Geneva, September 20

I RECENTLY spent ten days in Germany—two days in Frankfort and the rest in Berlin. I had not been in either place for eight years and my first impression was how dead they both appeared to be. I had intended to stay at the Englischerhof at Frankfort, but it was closed for lack of custom. At the Bristol, where I put up, there were about a score of visitors. One evening I dined on the terrace at the Frankfurterhof. I counted seventeen diners and was told that they were all Frankfort people. There was not a light in a single window of the great hotel. A German in the train told me that there were hardly any foreigners at Baden Baden and other holiday resorts in South Germany. There are very few first- or second-class passengers in the trains. In the afternoon express from Frankfort to Berlin, for which there is a small extra supplement (three marks) in addition to the ordinary express supplement, the first-class compartments were quite empty and the second-class passengers averaged less than one for each compartment. There were so few passengers that no dinner was served in the dining-car, though seven or eight people ate à la carte.

In Berlin the hotels, usually so crowded in August with foreign visitors, were nearly empty. No doubt the depreciation of the dollar and the pound has something to do with it, but there have been plenty of English and other summer visitors in some other European countries, and even in Switzerland, now the dearest country in Europe, bad as the season has been, there have been rather more tourists than last year. Germans themselves admitted, even while regretting it, that hostility to the present German regime had kept foreigners away. The more they stay away, the better. It is good for Germans to be made to feel that the opinion of the civilized world is against them, and nothing will bring that home to them more effectively than being made to feel the pinch economically. By staying away foreigners support the necessary economic boycott.

It was not only the absence of foreign visitors that made Berlin appear dead, especially in the evening. On a Saturday evening there was a fairly large crowd in the Kurfürstendamm, but the next evening there were not half the people that one used to see there on a Sunday night. The center of Berlin looked as deserted in the evening as a village, but what struck me most was the pall of gloom that hung over the working-class quarters. At about eight o'clock on a Saturday evening I went to see a family of my acquaintance living in a street in a populous quarter. I remembered what the quarter was like on such a fine, warm Saturday evening nine or ten years ago, when I was living in Berlin—the streets full of children playing, hawkers selling their wares, people walking up and down, talking and laughing. This time I went through deserted streets. The people are afraid to go out and afraid to speak above a whisper, even when they are at home with doors and windows closed. At one corner of the street that I visited two Nazis in uniform stood in front of a Nazi building of some sort.

There are uniforms everywhere, far more than in pre-war Germany and more even than in Italy. All day there are constant processions of Nazis in uniform or school children carrying flags. A dozen little girls headed by a bigger one march along two by two trying to do the goose-step. Sometimes the marchers sing the Horst Wessel song or "Siegreich werden wir Frankreich schlagen." Many of the schoolboys are in brown shirts. Any boy that does not join the Hitler *Jugend* has a bad time. There is every sort of military ceremony. Even the police go through a solemn ceremony of changing the guard on the Pariserplatz. In short, everything possible is done to cultivate a military spirit and hatred of foreigners and Jews. A German told me that he would like to send his son to a school abroad, if only it were possible, for hatred was being inculcated in the schools by means of garbled history. It is as plain in Germany as it is in Italy that the whole nation is being trained for war, although the training in Germany has not yet had time to become so complete. Nor is the training merely theoretical. Boys from fourteen to sixteen practice under the supervision of a teacher throwing dummy hand grenades at pasteboard soldiers in dummy trenches. There is no secret about it. They can be seen doing it in Berlin. Germany will soon have a large army, for which the Reichswehr will provide the officers. The recent demonstration at Nürnberg was a rehearsal of a mobilization. For years the men in the Reichswehr have been trained to act as non-commissioned officers in a national conscript army. For the revival of German militarism does not date from the advent of Hitler. That has only made it evident to the world. Noske, Scheidemann, and Ebert were its first parents—and Scheidemann has been deprived of his German nationality!

The moral atmosphere of Germany is appalling. One has the impression of being in a criminal lunatic asylum. It is not surprising that the Berlin correspondents feel the strain. Not that all the inhabitants are lunatics or criminals. Opinions in the foreign colony in Berlin differ on the question whether the majority of the German people are at heart with Hitler, but those who think that they are not add that it makes no difference. It will be as easy to make the flock of sheep march to the battlefield as it is to make them march down Unter den Linden. On the other hand, it is quite possible that if the armies of England, France, Poland, and the Little Entente walked into Germany, they would be welcomed by half the people, if they behaved well and especially if the occupation were accompanied by commercial concessions, such as a customs agreement. In any other country a foreign occupation would intensify nationalist feeling, but not necessarily in Germany. The British army was adored in Cologne, and when it left, a high local official said in a public speech that the occupation had strengthened the ties between Germany and England. The French and Belgian armies were disliked because their commands behaved so stupidly. The fundamental cause of German nationalism and German anti-Semitism is an inferiority complex which the Germans are trying to get rid of by loudly proclaiming their superiority to all other races in the hope of persuading

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themselves. They know perfectly well that the French are not a Negroid race, as Hitler said in "Mein Kampf" and as the Nazi papers are saying every day. At bottom they hate the French for the same reason that they hate the Jews —namely, because they believe them to be more intelligent and more civilized than themselves.

The Nazi movement is a conscious and deliberate attempt to destroy European civilization and return to barbarism. Recently the *Neue Tagebuch,* published in Paris, said that the Nazis were going back to the primeval forest. On August 28 a Nazi leader, one Dr. Haupt, speaking to about four thousand school teachers at Harzburg, said that the *Neue Tagebuch* was right.

> The primeval forest is the symbol of our people, who come from nature, from the forest. It is a natural people that has rediscovered its origins and gone back to its native soil. This primitive people will listen only to the forces of its nature. The reply to the Treaty of Versailles is that the German people has left the path of Western civilization.

It has, indeed. This was brought home to me when I looked in Frankfort for the monument of Heinrich Heine, one of the finest examples of modern German sculpture, and found that it had been removed. So had the war memorial, partly because its sculptor was a Jew, but partly, no doubt, because its tendency was pacific. It did not glorify war but symbolized its horrors. And the only inscription on it was "To the victims." That sort of thing does not encourage the future victims. Between Heine and the primeval forest there was nothing in common. The Nazis must feel, too, that there is an unpleasant personal application in a line in one of Heine's poems, "Ich bin ein echter Deutscher Esel." And "ein schlechter Esel" into the bargain.

Never have I met with such a consensus of opinion among men of different nationalities, different outlooks, and different political standpoints as that which exists among the foreign correspondents and, indeed, in the whole foreign colony in Berlin. With insignificant exceptions they are all agreed about the character of the Nazi regime and the way to deal with it. As to the character of the regime, it must by now be known to most people. The persecution of Jews, Socialists, Communists, pacifists, and republicans continues. There are probably about 80,000 persons in concentration camps. Jews are still beaten up, but usually at night. So many have been beaten up in Berlin and the other big towns that the physical outrages are fewer there than they were, but in Berlin the Nazis go out in huge motor trams at about three o'clock in the morning to do their work. Breslau and Nürnberg are now two of the places where the Jews are being treated worst. But the outrages, brutal as they are, are less serious than the systematic attempt to deprive Jews of any means of subsistence. They have been squeezed out of the professions, for even Jews allowed in theory to practice as lawyers or doctors cannot get clients. People dare not go to them. And the other day seven Jewish lawyers were assaulted in the law court at Frankfort and then arrested, but released the next day. Now the Jews are being gradually squeezed out of all businesses, including even the banks. In many parts of Germany, notably in the Ruhr, the boycott of Jewish shops continues silently. The names of people entering them are taken and published in the papers. A member of the German government recently boasted that in a year there would no longer be any Jewish question. It would be *erledigt*. It is openly declared that if the Jews are tolerated at all, it will ultimately be only as helots without civil rights, condemned to hard manual labor.

Foreign opinion in Berlin is that there is no chance at all of an overthrow of the Hitler regime by the Germans themselves. The stories of Communist underground activities are greatly exaggerated. The Communists seem to be the only Germans with any courage and they are doing what they can to organize secret opposition, but it is very little and has no chance of success. The Nazis encourage exaggerated stories of Communist activities to give themselves an excuse for further barbarities. The hope of an overthrow of Hitler by the Reichswehr is an illusion. The Reichswehr might have done something months ago, but it is now too late. There should be no mistake about it. Hitler is the complete master of Germany and has come to stay, unless he is overthrown by intervention from outside. We should not make the mistake that so many of us made about Italian fascism. Foreign opinion in Berlin is that outside intervention is necessary, will be sooner or later inevitable (for the Nazis will make it so), and that the sooner it comes, the better for everybody, including Germany. What is meant is military intervention—an occupation of Germany—although if the United States and England, for instance, agreed on a policy of economic pressure, that would no doubt have considerable effect. We have to deal with people that understand nothing but force and will yield to nothing but force or the certainty that force will be used if necessary. "Friendly representations," such as the British and French governments so foolishly made about Austria, will have about as much effect on Hitler as they would on Attila or Al Capone. The only result of those particular "friendly representations" has been a great increase in Hitler's prestige in Germany, for he is now the man who has inflicted a humiliating rebuff on the governments of the two greatest Powers in Europe. Incidentally, their dear friend, Mussolini, advised him to inflict it.

The poltroonery and supineness of the British and French governments are likely to bring about the very disasters that they seek to avoid. For now that Hitler believes that England and France are afraid of him and dare not take any decisive step, he will be encouraged to do something that they cannot overlook. The British and French governments should have him up before the League of Nations. There are plenty of counts on which to indict him. They could and should, for example, ask for a League inquiry into German rearmament. It is said in official circles in Berlin that the German government would refuse to appear before the League and would give notice of withdrawal from it. Nothing could be better, for then we should have a free hand, but would even Hitler be so stupid? In any case, men that have lived in Germany for years realize that Europe is threatened with a new invasion of the barbarians and will succumb to it unless it is repulsed.

Meanwhile we must boycott Germany, morally and economically. Young people are still being sent there from England, and perhaps from other countries, to be humbugg d by the Nazis. This should cease. It is difficult to restrain the silly people who after a week or two in Germany, during which they have seen no Jews beaten up in the streets, go back to their own countries and declare that the stories told

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in the papers about Germany are all untrue. Recently an Englishman who had conducted a party of young people to Germany told a German audience in the Rathaus in Berlin that now he knew that what the foreign correspondents said about Germany was false. He knew because the Nazis had told him so. Modesty might have suggested to him that men whose business it is to find out the facts, many of whom have lived for years in Germany, probably knew more than he did, but modesty is not a characteristic of these casual visitors who give testimonials to the Nazi movement and the German government. Few of them ever take the trouble to make inquiries from newspaper correspondents or foreign residents. They wish to be deceived.

The moral boycott should extend to relations of every kind. There should be no more cooperation of any sort with Germans, neither in athletics nor in any other domain. They have excluded the Jews from all social and athletic relations. Let us exclude them.

The Revolution in Spain

I. Revolt from the Top

By ANITA BRENNER

Madrid, August 17

WHEN the Second Spanish Republic is history it will be put in a chapter with the First Republic of 1873-74 and, contradictory as this may sound, with the seven years of dictatorship under Primo de Rivera. It is generally described as the "French Revolution" of Spain, a century overdue. But though in some respects the fall of Alfonso XIII had a family resemblance to the fall of his French kinsman, actually the process which brought the republic about, and even more the two and a half years of its life to date, have fundamentally much more in common with Spain's own previous attempts to perform what several of her supreme statesmen have called *la revolución desde arriba*—a revolution from the top.

The name is self-explanatory. The idea, which at present is shared by a good portion of this world's desperate humanity, has been active in Spanish politics for almost a hundred years, but it had been tried before it was given a name. Each trial has been ushered in by either war or smothered revolution and has ended in a brusque change. Almost each trial has been accompanied by uprisings, acts of violent pressure, as if the formula of "revolution from the top" were a product of the forces of revolution grinding against the forces of reaction.

The Bourbon dynasty was also from the first caught and ground between the forces of always latent and sometimes active revolution and those of equally potent and dangerous reaction. The idea of revolution from the top in itself contains the contradiction in the Bourbon tradition in Spain, —reform by force, and liberalist intentions carried out by the practice of rigidly absolute rule. It was tried by the first Bourbon, Felipe V, who was crowned in 1701 and was almost immediately plunged into a war that lasted eleven years. It was tried again by his son Fernando VI, and by Fernando's brother Carlos III, who went farther than the first two Bourbons and attacked the power of the church, cutting down the privileges of the Inquisition, expelling the Jesuits, and proclaiming the freedom of the press. The next two Bourbons canceled almost everything that the first three had done, and of these the later, Fernando VII, whose reign was split in two by the French invasion in 1808 and the reign of Joseph Bonaparte, brought back the Jesuits and restored the Inquisition. He also broke his oath to abide by the constitution written in 1812, while he was in exile.

Fourteen bloodily repressed revolts followed, and in this period Spain lost all her American colonies except Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Fernando's death brought a civil war, the Carlist war, that lasted for six years. Though theoretically a war of succession it was actually a struggle between the Catholic absolutists and the liberals, and between the feudal and the industrial-commercial regions of Spain. At the same time the liberals, who were in possession of the power because they were the party backing the Queen Regent Maria Cristina and her infant daughter Isabel against the Pretender Carlos, the dead king's brother, were split into moderates and progressives. Both led uprisings and revolts, and both at the same time tried to control "headless" popular uprisings, such as one led by a sergeant who broke into the queen's bedroom and forced her to recognize the constitution of 1812.

The progressives in power in the reign of Isabel II launched a revolution from the top. They wrote a new constitution, nationalized church property, and expropriated much of the church's land, which they distributed among the peasants. All religious and military orders were suppressed. Tithes and tributes were abolished. These measures meant about 5,000,000 pesetas in the royal treasury from the sale of some church properties, and the flight of 36,000 friars. They followed a revolution from below which in 1835 had swept the country, hurling blindly savage mobs against everything that was Catholic. Churches and convents had been burned and sacked, and thousands of monks and friars beheaded. Even the images in the churches, and in many monasteries even the small bas-relief images on the columns, had been hacked beyond hope of repair.

Isabel II was a gay and scandalously democratic queen, but she reigned uneasily. Her revolution from the top zigzagged between uprisings from the bottom, Carlist outbreaks, and coups d'etat in the struggle within the liberal camp. The country was full of bandits, beggars, and rebels, and it was at war in Morocco, Cuba, Cochin-China, and Mexico (on account of Maximilian). This devil's brew exploded first, during the regency of the Queen Mother, in a semi-democratic revolt that frightened the royal ladies into France and put the head of the progressives into the regency, and finally in the republican uprising of 1868, which presented Spain with its first republic and fifth constitution.

Revolution from the top was the motto of the men of

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the First Republic. They were divided into three factions, but they shared the idea put forth eloquently by Francisco Pi y Margall, the intellectual of the government. It was their motto because they wanted order, prosperity, and democracy, and they dreaded the violence in the demands made upon them from below. They governed hopefully, trying to be moderate and to achieve liberal ends slowly, meanwhile trying to pacify the forces of reaction by compromise. At the same time they had to spend most of their energy—as Azaña does today—on the sheer problem of staying in power, because they were threatened from the right by Carlist outbreaks and from the left by peasant revolts and other popular uprisings.

The parallel between the two republics at this stage is startling. Azaña knows it. That is why he is Minister of War. A military coup d'etat cut the First Republic down at the age of nine months and brought Alfonso XII to the throne; and a sixth constitution was written. Then Alfonso, and after his death the Queen Regent Maria Cristina, managed to have most of the previous reforms forgotten or put away. Uprisings and Spain's first strikes and labor riots were crushed and held in check by a top-heavy army and a very expensive spy and police system. The peasants of Andalusia, Castile, and Extremadura developed a fierce hatred for the Civil Guard, originally a corps organized to do away with guerrilla-bandits. The loss of Cuba and the Philippines caused a revolutionary flare toward the end of the century, which settled into a smolder in Catalonia, the richest commercial-industrial region in Spain and always the backbone of revolutions. The smolder flared again in 1905, shortly after Alfonso XIII was crowned; in 1909, provoked by the war in Morocco; and in 1917, when it was focused in Barcelona and pushed to the point of a labor revolt by the anarcho-syndicalists, who at that time had the great majority of the Spanish proletariat behind them.

So, in the shape of Primo de Rivera, came the desperate and familiar remedy: revolution from the top. Dictator and king joined hands with big business to transform Spain into a prosperous, modern, liberal industrial country, by force and rapidly. Monopolies were established and contracts were made which brought rich returns to the treasury and made business in Spain a pleasure. Roads, schools, hospitals, government buildings, and nice new jails spread over the country. The war in Morocco was ended. Hotels were built with government money in every picturesque or historic town, and a national advertising and tourist bureau was created to develop another source of civilization and revenue. Modern architecture, modern lighting, a good telephone and telegraph service, all flowed from the source of plenty. Attempts were made to create a new kind of government on the basis of national "assemblies of notables" and officially created "patriotic unions." The Socialists were given a place in the government.

However, money went out faster than it came in, and a mounting debt began to cause dictatorial and royal headaches. Furthermore, the prosperity Spain had enjoyed during the war shrank to proportions which, though still bigger than before the war, were not big enough to satisfy the new industrialists and the new industrial proletariat. Panic tightened the reins and the dictatorship assumed the contradictory character of Bourbon tradition and of previous revolutions from the top. The press was muzzled, the universities were policed, the students clubbed and sabered, their professors jailed and deported. Terror was the order of the day in Barcelona for all rebels of whatever doctrine. Mysterious political murders occurred nightly; "fugitive law" was applied; there were so many spies that nobody talked to his neighbor. The dictatorship even tried to force Catalans to speak only Castilian, though Castilian is a foreign language to most Catalan children and peasants. A Catalan who forgot himself and spoke his own language to an official was rudely ordered to "talk like a Christian."

Monarchists and republicans agree that after the Rivera dictatorship the fall of Alfonso XIII was inevitable. The seven years of revolution from the top turned everybody except absolute royalists (Carlists) and extremely pious Catholics against the king. Monarchists who believed in royalty but not in divine right and who expected a constitution and civil liberties agitated as much as anyone else, not against the Crown but against the King, and some went so far as to call him, from the platform, a tyrant, a traitor, and a worm. In the last year of the monarchy the jails were practically political clubs in which conservatives plotted with Communists and fervently radical lieutenants, and were aided and abetted by the guards, the wardens, and sometimes the superintendent of the jail.

These alliances put the leadership of the republican revolution from the first in the hands of coalitions formed on a minimum program of Down with the King! The left got behind everybody who pledged the end of the Crown, and the right promised support on condition that the change was made without violence. Therefore a number of strikes and military outbreaks, any one of which might easily have been the beginning of the end, were checked or smothered. And therefore the republic was *voted* in almost by acclamation, and the royal family was escorted to the border politely, and not a palace, nor a church, nor a convent, nor a store, nor a bodega was touched, except to remove the royal insignia.

The Second Spanish Republic, proclaimed on April 14, 1931, inherited many problems which other countries had solved long ago: huge stretches of land still held in practically feudal tenure; a state cemented to the church, which controlled the education, social welfare, and soul of Spain and had a generous share of the national budget; provinces, each with its own language and culture, and long resentful of the tyrannical centralism practiced by Madrid. It also inherited a lusty collection of modern problems: a budget painfully burdened by the dictatorship; urgent financial, industrial, and labor problems aggravated by the world crisis; and, finally, a population whose health and education had been sadly neglected.

The men of the Second Republic faced these problems on April 15 with enthusiasm, generosity, considerable technical knowledge and political experience, and the sense of security which came from knowing that they were supported by the overwhelming majority of the population. But they were also bound by pledges, each involving compromise, and each one found himself allied to men and principles normally in the enemy territory. The Cabinet of the Provisional Government which proceeded triumphantly to the palace on April 14 to inform Alfonso that he was deposed was an assembly including three conservative Catholic republicans, one of whom had only recently been a constitutional mon-

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archist; three left-wing republicans, among them an ex-anarchist; three Socialists; and two unconditional democrats, one of them known as a "Jacobin."

That Cabinet, though in theory republican, at heart had little faith in democracy. It half believed the royalist prophets who said that the Spanish people would go amuck in a revolution and would loot, burn, plunder, murder, and rape. It was more than half convinced that the masses of Spain were "not prepared"—one hears that phrase a hundred times a day—to use the privileges of free citizens with intelligence and dignity. In spite of the astonishing demonstration to the contrary they had just witnessed, and in spite of daily proof since, at any newsstand and in any public place, that Spaniards of every class are perfectly aware of the significance of democracy, and that they read, discuss, and think many times before they judge, the men of the republic feared the free play of political and civil liberty, and preferred instead to jump ahead of it if necessary; in other words, to perform a revolution from the top.

Without the key contained in that formula, it is hard to understand the acts of the constitutional Cortes elected shortly after the republic was proclaimed, and the policies of the three coalition Cabinets which have since held the power. They have been composed, with a few changes, of the same men who took the Provisional Government in hand. These three Cabinets have performed the dangerously agile feat of maintaining the complicated balances established between opposites for the purpose of bringing about a republic. They have done this entirely by the skill of Manuel Azaña, the strange, cold, clever man whom nobody knew before the republic, and whom everybody now calls the Man of the Republic. With a Cortes split among eleven parties and heavily weighted toward the left, Azaña has managed to juggle political combinations that would in every case guarantee a majority vote for the Cabinet's decisions; for example, the Socialists have been hypnotized into voting for laws which they say go against the grain with them. And this is true of every party represented.

But with compromise comes deadlock; and between them the republican government swings right and left incomprehensibly if one forgets that it is itself a contradiction—in theory a democracy and in practice a dictatorship determined to give Spain what its leaders believe she needs, whether or not that is what she cries for at this particular moment. Taken as a whole, the constitution and the laws written by this government divide sharply into measures of radical reform and measures of radical repression, neither of which are laws of a democracy. The constitution calls Spain a "republic of workers of all classes," and guarantees every citizen "all the conditions of a dignified existence," but until the day before yesterday, August 15, the constitution was virtually suspended by the Law of Defense of the Republic, which in practice canceled the civil liberties—freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of assembly—guaranteed in the constitution.

There are hundreds of political prisoners in the government jails, some royalist and some radical. Meetings of any kind, even meetings of ten or fifteen people, must be authorized and must have a policeman present. The right and extreme left—anarchist, Communist—press is censored. There are three national police patrols. And there are two new laws which put civil liberties somewhere near the moon. These conditions, together with the laws on the other side of the fence—church laws especially—have considerably cooled the vast popular enthusiasm that two years ago indorsed every move of the new government. Now it is under fire from almost every direction, and Azaña, who is still the Man of the Republic, maneuvers busily and quietly to prolong the life of this Cabinet and this Cortes, which are nevertheless expected to dissolve daily and may be history by the time this statement is in print.

What comes next? Nobody knows. Each known solution seems full of danger. The possibilities tossed about in the press and the cafes are an all-republican conservative Cabinet and government, still with Azaña in it; an all-Socialist Cabinet; a dictatorship. Also, in case of elections, violence and, according to the most outspoken of the numerous citizens questioned by this writer, "either the fascists or the bolsheviks," although the latter are weak and divided and there are no signs as yet of an organized fascio or of a fascist messiah. Whatever the solution, it seems unlikely that Spain will have what we call a democracy. She stands deadlocked and nervous between two equally mighty forces, and the struggle between them will decide whether the Spanish Revolution that every Spaniard is talking about will be a revolution from the bottom or a revolution from the top.

[*This article, the first of a series on the Spanish Revolution, was written before the Cabinet crisis of September 8. Subsequent articles will discuss later phases of the situation.*]

In the Driftway

ANYBODY who has ever glanced at the Drifter's column in *The Nation* must have had the surprise of his life when he learned that the Drifter was to drift on the radio. But nobody could have been more surprised than the Drifter himself. The Drifter is no Timid Soul. He is not cursed with any offensive modesty. But he has always thought that his particular kind of babble would last about as long on the radio as a five-cent chunk of ice in the Hot Place. (The Drifter says "Hot Place" because he surmises he would not be permitted to say "Hell" on the radio.) Anyhow the Drifter, who hates publicity almost as much as he does spinach, is not responsible for his appearance on the radio. It is all arranged—just as is everything about a modern periodical—by the advertising and publicity departments.

* * * * *

AS the Drifter recalls it, he received a letter from either the advertising manager or the publicity director—he has forgotten which. He stuck it in a pocket, intending to read it later, but never gave it another thought until he was called on the telephone a week after and asked if he would agree to the plan suggested in the letter. Not wishing to admit that he hadn't read the letter, the Drifter replied in a mood of repentance that he had always been known as an agreeable person and might be counted on to agree to the plan suggested. Since then the Drifter has been flattered by the most solicitous attention. The advertising manager has taken out an insurance policy on his life, while the publicity director has engaged a private detective to dog his steps and

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see that he does not try to join Sam Insull in Greece. The publicity director tells him what he must say and the advertising manager what he mustn't. The Drifter has about as much freedom of action as a groom on his wedding day.

* * * * *

FOR years the Drifter has been speculating as to what a column such as he attempts should be like. Now he knows. His keepers have explained to him in great detail the kind of column which he always writes—meaning, of course, the kind of column they want him to write. It was moderately amusing, even instructive, until the Drifter was told that he was not contentious. That is almost as cruel as telling a man he is harmless, and the Drifter bristled right up and retorted that even his best friends regarded him not only as contentious but as positively venomous. One of the Drifter's captors went so far in the direction of informing him what he was expected to write as to submit a list of half a dozen of his recent columns which, it was tactfully explained, were especially characteristic and unusually good. When the Drifter looked over the list he discovered that five of the six specimens of his work chosen as especially characteristic and unusually good were the work of other persons, contributed at a time when the Drifter was sick. The one product of his own pen was a piece for which the Drifter never much cared.

* * * * *

BUT there is gain as well as loss in the life of a kept Drifter. For instance, the number of contributions has increased prodigiously. The Drifter has so many versions of the kind of column he always writes that he will never have to produce another line himself. The barrel of sermons which the old-time preacher was supposed to accumulate and draw from is nothing compared with the Drifter's hogshead. It was said of the ships turned out by the Shipping Board during the World War that they were built by the mile and cut off in lengths to suit. The Drifter seems now to have so much material in stock that for the rest of his days he need only sit with scissors in hand and snip off words in the number desired.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Praise for Mrs. Rumsey

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Paul Y. Anderson indulges his proclivity for "Pin Pricks and Brickbats" in the September 13 issue of *The Nation* in his allusions to the NRA. Good journalism should be entertaining, but when we are reading about a matter of serious import to all of us we prefer enlightenment to drollery.

Mr. Anderson speaks of the Consumers' Advisory Committee. There is no such thing in the NRA. I imagine he refers to the Consumers' Advisory Board when he says: "The Consumers' Advisory Committee (*sic*), up to this week, was a total loss. Its chief purpose seemed to be to give Mrs. Mary Harriman Rumsey a season in Washington. Within the last few days, however, the activities of the committee have been placed under the direction of a first-rate economist, Dexter Keezer. Now there is a possibility that it will do something useful."

It has not been a total loss up to this week (September 13). Let us take one instance. The President signed the oil code on August 19. The oil code, as presented by the oil industry, contained provisions intended to destroy the 1,500 existing cooperative oil-distributing societies and to check the formation of new societies, which is going on at the rate of about two a week. These are consumers' societies for the processing and distribution of petroleum products for the members. These consumers' cooperative oil societies represent $15,000,000 of farmers' investment, and last year saved the members some $6,000,000. Their destruction would be a calamity to a million farmers. It was prevented by the Consumers' Advisory Board; and the person who did most of the work to accomplish this result was Mrs. Rumsey.

Mrs. Rumsey worked with committees, conferences, and hearings. She went to every department of the government that could be of service. She personally saw the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior. She elicited opinions, decisions, and assistance from the experts in law and in code-framing. She even resorted to plain old-fashioned political action. She personally presented the case to deputy administrators. I was with her one morning when she aroused such an official from his sleep; he came out of his bedroom in his wrapper to listen to the case of the cooperative consumers. She reached General Johnson, and elicited his interest in this cooperative problem. She took the matter to the President. No discouragement stopped her efforts; and in the end she got results.

Woods Hole, Mass., September 18 J. P. WARBASSE

Consumers in Action

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

All this talk about protecting consumers will end in just more talk. And the consumers will pay the bill, for they only among the economic groups of the country are completely unorganized and helpless. This is said with a recognition that the consumer and the worker or farmer are really one and the same person. But from Washington down no effective methods for their protection as consumers has come forth. Radicals and liberals alike imagine that ownership determines control and that nothing can be done without first changing ownership. But recent research indicates that control by ultimate consumers of the flow of goods is much more important at this stage than ownership, because those who control the economic process, not those who own, have the immediate and final say.

Realizing this, labor people, farmers, engineers, church people, and cooperators have for nearly two years been working away at the problem of so organizing consumers that they may exercise control of the distributive process for their own protection. Through their efforts Cooperative Distributors, Inc., has been founded as a national cooperative distributing association, owned and operated by ultimate consumers. This association now has a membership reaching from coast to coast. It controls the testing of consumers' goods in its own laboratory and elsewhere. It distributes and even produces an ever-growing list of commodities. It acts as a purchasing agency for non-profit organizations, cooperative clubs, and individual consumers. The interest of consumers may be gauged by the fact that during the first seven months of its existence this association received some 7,000 requests for its literature.

Local cooperative clubs affiliated with Cooperative Distributors are being organized throughout the country. Through their own committees, which check quality and price, they pro-

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tect the local consumer. They investigate gasolines and oils and purchase collectively for their members at lower cost. The clubs' own purchasing agents buy coal and other supplies on a specifications basis for their members. They watch for opportunities to improve their milk and vegetable supplies. They make arrangements with nearby mills to grind their cereals, and maintain the right to inspect the mills without previous notice to the operators.

In Chicago our affiliated Consumers' Cooperative Services has grown to 400 members in a short while. The Trenton, New Jersey, Cooperative Club is interested, among other things, in improving the milk supply. It is cooperating with the farmers of Solebury, Pennsylvania, who produce the Guernsey milk which the people of Trenton consume after it has been exploited by a corporation. The farmers who are being forced into bankruptcy and the consumers who pay high prices are so incensed that they will meet together shortly, under the chairmanship of the farmer vice-president of Cooperative Distributors, to organize jointly for self-protection.

Our cooperative clubs can cooperate. They can also refuse to cooperate in a still largely competitive society. By placing a product or a service on their "consumers' unfair list," they can deal a blow which will command respect. Their power is already being felt. Who said the American consumer would not organize? Further information may be had from 128 East Sixteenth Street, New York City.

New York, September 15 E. J. Lever

The "Mob" and the "Best People"

To the Editors of The Nation:

In a recent letter to *The Nation* Robert Herrick feels called upon to rise to the defense of the "mob" against the attack of a college professor representing, according to Mr. Herrick, the "best people," whom he defines as those whose social and educational advantages are superior to those of the herd. The writer then expresses his belief that the "mob" has been consistently right, when his "best people" have been wrong, and strangely indeed, cites for his first example the World War and the aggravating peace. Allowing the assumption that the people of the belligerent countries had no part in the events leading to hostilities, it should be obvious that they did nothing to prevent the outrage, and if my memory serves me right, afterwards displayed an enthusiasm for the war which has not been prevalent in any cause since.

As for the ensuing peace, again it can probably be shown that the people had no direct hand in framing its iniquities, but the so-called statesmen who did so merely reflected the attitude of their respective countrymen. It seems only yesterday that one heard the respectable "man in the street" demanding the "hanging of the Kaiser," or saying, "We didn't go far enough," and "We should have devastated Germany," and although fourteen years have elapsed since the signing of the Versailles treaty, it is not from the "mob" that one may expect protests against the injustices of that treaty. Nor has the "mob" sense of justice in California provoked it to intervene on behalf of Mooney and Billings! The whole truth of the matter is that the "mob" is overwhelmed by the surge of its own passions, and is rarely, if ever, found on the right side of any controversial question. If the masses happen to vote for the right man at the right time, it is usually a matter of luck rather than perception! The same mass vote which elected Franklin Roosevelt also chose Calvin Coolidge, and one need look no farther than Germany for an excellent example of "mob" psychology!

Where Mr. Herrick falls into his most grievous error, however, is in his definition of the "best people" as college professors, business executives, Winston Churchill, and Herbert Hoover! After all it should be perfectly clear that such people as these differ from the rest of the "mob" only in their status within the "mob." The "mob" creates its idols in its own image, and Mr. Hoover in his pompous "rugged individualism" merely expressed the ideas of the masses in concrete form. Furthermore, although the Great Engineer is now discredited by the "mob," the type he so aptly personifies is still, I regret to observe, the reigning ideal of the contemporary masses both here and abroad. Democracy lowers the standards and ideals of civilization to the dead level of mediocrity and creates a tendency, most noticeable in the United States, to exalt the mediocre to a position of recognition and respect. Only by following men who are obviously independent of the "mob," such as Shaw, Russell, Chase, Debs, Thomas, and others whose thought is consistently clear and intellectual, may an intelligent man divorce himself from the falsity and stupidity of "mob" psychology!

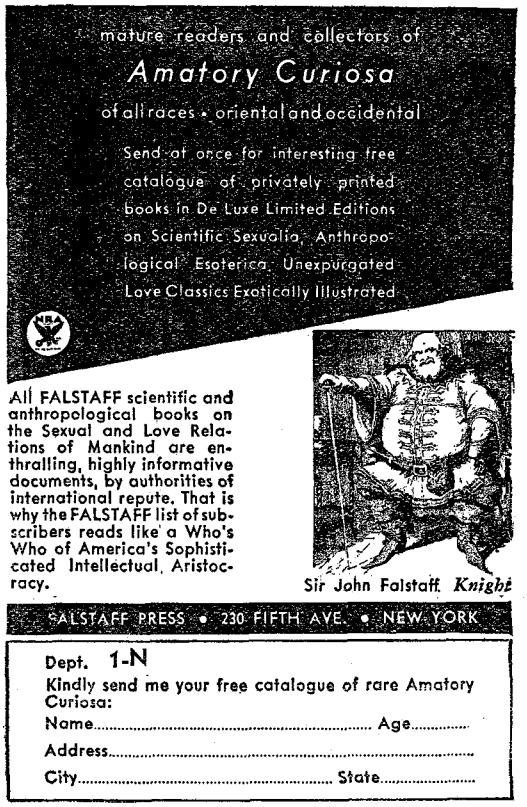
San Francisco, Cal., September 13 G. A. Baldwin

A Word at the Right Time

To the Editors of The Nation:

In your issue of September 20 Mr. Villard feels called upon to preface his admirable article on Sir Edward Grey with an explanation of why he criticizes a statesman only just passed away. Many readers of *The Nation*—I hope most readers—will hardly require that paragraph. Precisely this readiness to speak a needed word at the time when multitudes are averse to cool thinking has made *The Nation* the important force which it is. The tortures which our planet is undergoing are due far less to wickedness than to such unenlightened emotions as necessitated those introductory sentences by Mr. Villard. More power to him and his associates!

Brooklyn, N. Y., September 22 Henry Neumann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Literature and Utopia

By JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

I

THE American intellectual is no longer much interested in literature as such. "Culture" of the more genteel sort went out with the decline of New England's dominance, and the hard-boiled renaissance which followed a couple of decades ago was short-lived indeed. While it lasted it generated both the "hog-butcher" poems of Carl Sandburg and a particular sort of aestheticism having its center in Greenwich Village, but only an emergent element of social protest survived.

The little magazines are no longer devoted to either rootabaga epics or "pagan" songs. They no longer shock the middle class with imagistic forms or fleshly improprieties. Even Bohemia has grown grim, and the attic philosopher, having discarded the windsor tie of the artist for the flannel shirt of the worker, descends from his eyrie to frighten the simple citizen with the red flag of revolution, instead of, as was his wont, with the twin banners of free love and free verse.

Moreover—and as usual—the behavior of the lunatic fringe merely parodies the behavior of the more substantial intellectual. He, too, rarely thinks of himself now as primarily an artist of any kind, but almost always as either an economist or a social philosopher. His instrument may happen to be the brush or the typewriter; he may make woodcuts or compose novels; but in any event he talks less of "significant form" than of "social significance," and he is pretty sure to think of himself as enlisted in one service or the other of the army of social reform.

A few years ago it was the "crudeness" of America which most worried the intellectual. He was determined to free her from the tyranny of her exclusive concern with material and moral values, to teach her how the "good life" as practiced in more civilized communities included both an appreciation of the beautiful for its own sake and a most unpuritan acceptance of the amenities, even the luxuries, of life. Now he has lost his enthusiasm for what he used to call "culture." The "cultivated Frenchman," or the "good European" of England or Germany, is no longer a model to be imitated, but a horrible example of decadent frivolity, a feebly luminous but fungoid excrescence nourishing itself upon the juices of a dying society. America is not, as he had once thought, too standardized and too homogeneous. Instead, she is rotten with individualism and a vague, idealistic good-will. She is too tolerant, too eclectic, too little fanatical. What she needs is not cultivation but indoctrination; not more culture in the old vague sense of a familiarity with the best that has been thought and said, but rather a greater and more exclusive concern with the formulas of a new and living religion of materialism.

This attitude is shared by most of the more "advanced" writers, no matter to what particular sect they may belong, but as usual it is the Communists who have best succeeded in expressing the attitude in slogan form: "Art is a weapon." That, to be sure, is exactly what the Puritan would have said if he had said anything at all. It is, as a matter of fact, exactly the assumption which is behind the remark of Mr. Babbitt when he asks what a picture is "good for," or when he complains that a certain novel will not make him or anybody else "a better man." Of course weapons may be used by either side and in more than one sort of battle, but the immediate point to be noticed is that the intellectual has reversed his position. For approximately two decades he struggled valiantly to convince his countrymen that there exists a set of independent values which are called aesthetic. He poured ridicule upon such lingering representatives of an older day as still insisted that it was, after all, relevant to ask of a novel or poem what effect it would have upon the morals of society. But now he has come over to their side, so far at least as one fundamental principle is concerned. Art *is* useful. It *must* teach. It must "be good for something." The conception of a detached or neutral literature, of an art whose only end is the pleasure which art itself gives, is, he has now discovered, a conception born only of the bourgeois decadence.

Under the circumstances it is not easy for a heretic to win a patient hearing. The very fact that he is discussing literature at all when he ought, quite obviously, to be either discussing something important like economic conditions or at least producing some work of art calculated to further social progress militates against him. But I want to defend a paradox which may be stated thus: The chief function of fiction and drama and poetry is not to make anything or anybody better. It is not to improve society any more than it is to improve morals. Its purpose, rather, is to make existence tolerable to those who are compelled to accept Things As They Are.

II

Now of course no man either is or needs to be pure artist. As a human being he functions in various ways, looking at the world about him, now with the eye of the artist, and now with that of the humanitarian determined to improve both the world and himself. Not infrequently the novels which he writes and the pictures which he paints reflect these two sides of his nature. But my thesis is that man *qua* artist and man *qua* reformer are antithetical things, the reformer concerned largely with what he can do to the world, the artist primarily interested in what the world is doing to him. We must, says the one, change "all this." Let us, says the other, see what beauty, what joy, what heights and what depths of emotion our perceptions and our imaginations can induce "all this" to yield.

Oddly enough those persons whose temperaments are primarily utopian never seem to have noticed that the idea of Art and the idea of Utopia are fundamentally, and for a very good reason, completely antithetical. It is no accident that Plato banished the poet from the first Ideal Commonwealth of which we have any knowledge. His stern decree was not, as has sometimes been maintained, a strange perversity, but rather the necessary consequence of his logic, for

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the simple reason that no artist of any kind could have any possible use in a *perfect* commonwealth where men would be constantly immersed in the direct experience of things as they ought to be. His business is with men whose life is to some extent unsatisfactory, and whose experience is somehow incomplete. In various ways he teaches them to find such life and such experience worth the having, and to that extent he is the enemy of the reformer who wants nothing less than that men should find tolerable the kind of life they are leading. Unhappiness, discontent, and the sense that the world as it is can no longer be borne are the fulcrum of the reformer's lever, but the artist, on the other hand, is busily proving with his songs and his tales that it can—if only one is capable of contemplating the spectacle in his fashion. The one would abolish the slums; the other, putting his easel down between a perambulator and an ash can, discovers a fine subject.

So inevitable is the antithesis which Plato felt that it is bound to be rediscovered by every Utopian, who cannot but find, sooner or later, that he really has no use for the artist—hard as he may try, for conventional reasons, to find some place for him. Already the problem has presented itself to the Utopians of communism and they are working toward the only logical solution—namely, that of Plato—as is illustrated by a remark made to me in private conversation by the greatest of the Russian movie directors, Sergei Eisenstein. "My aim," he said, "is to destroy the moving picture."

Pressed for an explanation he replied somewhat as follows: "There are two kinds of art, bourgeois art and proletarian art. The first is an attempt to compensate for unsatisfied desires. The second is a preparation for social change. Now in the perfect state there will be no bourgeois art because there will be no unsatisfied desires. There will also be no proletarian art because there will be no necessity for further social change. Therefore, since I am working for the perfect state, I am also attempting to destroy the motion picture."

Neither Eisenstein nor Plato, be it noted, suggested that the banishment of the poet should be decreed as one of the necessary steps in the achievement of Utopia. Both implied merely that his function would be bound to disappear when the perfect state had come into being. But the important thing is that the Russian idealist, like his Greek forerunner, had been compelled to realize that the artist works with those maladjustments between man and either nature or society which it is the aim of the reformer to abolish. Mr. Eisenstein professed never to have heard of Plato's decree. Obviously, indeed, he resented the suggestion that there could be any parallel between his thought and that of a Greek philosopher whose sympathies were certainly not with the proletariat. But the fact remains that the reformer who pushes his attitude to its logical conclusion is bound to discover the fundamental antipathy which exists between him and the artist. Sometimes the poet—who is capable of imagining himself a reformer as he is capable of imagining himself anything at all—may dreamily exclaim:

> Ah, Love, could you and I conspire
> To seize this sorry scheme of things entire.
> Would we not shatter it to bits and then
> Remold it nearer to the heart's desire.

But give him merely what he can get in even this imperfect world, give him his loaf of bread, his jug of wine, and, for good measure, the not impossible—indeed, the almost inevitable—*her,* and he is more ready to exclaim, "That were paradise enow."

III

These days we hear a good deal about the contemptible evasions encouraged by the "literature of escape." Its enemies talk as though art were always and necessarily either a call to battle or a subtle "opiate of the people" designed for the express purpose of drugging them into a supine acceptance of the capitalist tyranny. Few seem to realize that many at least of its greatest examples have been neither, that art is essentially a form of rationalized and extended contemplation, designed primarily to render more vivid and assimilable those experiences which are capable of being enjoyed for their own sakes. Propaganda and "dreams" are both no more than occasional and incidental by-products; literature is really concerned with finding a way of looking at things. Thanks to man's power of contemplation, thanks to the fact that his most important life is led inside his mind, he can make even his thoughts about imperfection delightful. Calamities happen, but calamities furnish the material out of which tragedies are written, and the contemplation of tragedy is one of the purest, one of the most human, joys there is.

Perhaps this sounds somewhat illusive but it is really very simple. Consider one of the greatest works of literature—the tragedy, for example, of "Romeo and Juliet." The story, the incident upon which the whole is based, is lamentable enough. Two young people love each other with a great love. Brutal chance comes between them, and in trying to meet the difficulties which chance puts in their way, they meet death. Nothing like that could happen in Utopia. Probably most of its citizens would be, like most bees and most wasps, wholly free from the distracting influence of the sexual urge and concerned with nothing except the common good. Certainly no parents would be allowed to interfere with any eugenically desirable mating, and certainly no youth of either sex would seek a union not advantageous to the state. But Shakespeare neither preached a sermon against society nor sought refuge in a dream; his tragedy was neither propaganda nor "escape." What he did do was to discover so satisfactory a way of contemplating these incidents that we come away from "Romeo and Juliet" as we come away from "Hamlet" or "Othello," not depressed by the character of the incidents, but somehow rejoiced and exalted. He has focused his attention—and therefore ours also—upon the gains not the losses, so that the thing of which we are most keenly aware is this: How greatly they loved and, by comparison with their love, how unimportant is the fact that they died at last! Long life was not the business of these two human beings. Their business was to show how passionate, how lyric, love can be, and since they succeeded in this business their story is a story not of failure but of success. For that success it was, indeed, even necessary that they should die, because only by dying could they prove what they had to prove—namely, that death can sometimes seem unimportant in itself.

Such is the typical attitude of the artist toward the major calamities of life, and the result is much the same when he turns from them to its minor imperfections. What is Falstaff? He is a coward, a drunkard, and a liar. He has

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none of what are commonly called the major virtues. He has several of what are commonly called the major vices. Certainly he is not a good and not a useful citizen. Neither Plato nor Mr. Eisenstein would tolerate him for a moment in their perfect state. Even now they would insist that writers should write against him, and if really given the power, they would probably end by handing him over to the firing squad as beyond that "reeducation" to the possibilities of which they would attach so much importance. But what a pity it would be to destroy Falstaff in order to make society perfect, when we need only to contemplate him after the fashions which our artists encourage. There have been thousands of virtuous and useful citizens who might have been dispensed with much more easily than he, thousands of virtuous and useful persons whose names are by no one remembered. But Falstaff—this drunkard, this liar, and this cheat —has become one of the most precious possessions of the human race.

The artist, in other words, is concerned essentially with making the best that can be made of an imperfect world. He does not say that it cannot be improved or that man ought not to try to improve it. It is, after all, the business of the statesman, the teacher, and the moralist to concern themselves with such improvement, but it is not, primarily, the business of the artist. To him, ultimate wisdom seems to consist in realizing the fact that the world will always be fundamentally defective, and in trying to learn how to turn these defects into virtues by seeing some of them as comedy and some, too terrible to be laughed at, as the source of tragic magnificence. His chief function is not to promote Utopia but to make life in a far from utopian world tolerable at the very least.

Made in America: Erskine Caldwell

By CARL VAN DOREN

LIFE for Erskine Caldwell has lately been a kind of chronic tap day. One coterie after another has expected him to join it, and he has even been claimed as a member already of this or that society. Though he is pleased he is also a little puzzled. He has not thought of himself as writing in the special ways or for the deliberate ends with which he is credited. He wants, as he has always wanted, only to write as truthfully as he can about what he knows, and to be read by as many persons as he can interest.

Mr. Caldwell has interested different readers for different reasons. He, or his reputation, interested the screen, and he was called to Hollywood, which at once found it did not need him. He kindled the busybodies who look for vice in books, and they found they could not suppress him. He excites Communists and collectors. He has satisfied any number of aspiring, precarious magazines and has won a prize from the solid *Yale Review*. He is praised for his animal humor and for his spiritual elevation, for his bluff realism and for his tender insight, for his faithful use of folk-speech and for his creative reworking of his themes.

A writer who attracts a variety of readers with a variety of qualities does it not because he is himself a miscellany but because he is something single and impenetrable, and so rouses curiosity. Typical, glib writers are easy to analyze. They analyze themselves. Mr. Caldwell does not. Asked what a story of his means, he would probably give the best of all answers to the silly question: that the story means what it says. If he had known how to make it say more he would have done it. He does not talk well about what he has written, and seems not to like to talk about it at all. He prefers to talk about the aspects of life he has known at first hand, particularly in Georgia and Maine.

Mr. Caldwell himself is no more a Cracker than he is a Yankee. The son of a clergyman, he spent three years at the University of Virginia and another at Pennsylvania. But during his Georgia youth he lived so close to the people that he absorbed their folk-ways and learned to speak their language. When he tells stories about them he does not condemn or apologize, as he does not condescend. He never puts in explanatory asides, as if to remind his readers that he too, of course, knows how strangely his characters behave. He believes that the men and women he writes about would in these circumstances do precisely what he shows them doing. The frenzies of religion and of sex which he recounts are not, he holds, exaggerated. Ty Ty, Griselda, and Will Thompson in "God's Little Acre" are exceptional persons. Mr. Caldwell is telling their story, not the story of ordinary beings. His heroic figures, however, come from the people, and in their usual characteristics and actions follow the people's customs.

Although Mr. Caldwell accepts the usages which rule the lives of his poor whites, he is not sunk in them. Always he keeps the detachment of a powerful humor. When in "Tobacco Road" Sister Bessie and Dude buy the new automobile they go about it with the single-mindedness and irresponsibility of children. Dude is willing to marry a woman who is almost three times as old as he and whom he does not love, for the sake of being allowed to drive a new car and of blowing the horn as much as he likes. Bessie spends all the money she has and then takes no care of what she has bought. Like children she and Dude are incapable of looking farther ahead than the present moment and the present desire. They witlessly follow their impulses and completely fail to understand why there are consequences. They are callous to everything outside themselves because they have no imagination. Dude does not even stop long enough to find out if the accident he has caused has been fatal to its victim. "He looked like he was dead," he tells his father. And his father observed: "Niggers will get killed. Looks like there ain't no way to stop it."

This is appalling, but it is humor of a ruthless kind. At other times Mr. Caldwell can be humorous more lightly. In his latest volume of short stories "We Are the Living"* there is a bawdy masterpiece. Meddlesome Jack, based on the popular superstition that a jackass has a disturbing effect on women, is as truly a folk-story as if the writer were un-

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known. Its materials and its assumptions are all taken from the poor whites. Mr. Caldwell can be humorous in a trivial way, as in The Medicine Man in the same volume. Here he has missed the substantial laughter of the true folk-story and has told what belongs to the shoddy stage of a burlesque theater. After all, it is hardly more than a strip act in print. Yet whatever the uncertainty of his taste, Mr. Caldwell sees human life with the eye of humor. He sees more than his poor whites. "We Are the Living" contains four Maine stories. Folk-stories of another folk, they are as convincing and as funny as any of the Georgia tales. His humor has power over cautious Yankees no less than over Crackers running wild in the sun.

If humor gives Mr. Caldwell power over his materials, so does his faith in instinct. With no ascetic code to govern his approvals and disapprovals, he prefers life always to death. "The trouble with people," Ty Ty says, "is that they try to fool themselves into believing that they're different from the way God made them. You go to church and a preacher tells you things that deep down in your heart you know ain't so. But most people are so dead inside that they believe it and try to make everybody else live that way. People ought to live like God made us to live. When you sit down by yourself and feel what's in you, that's the real way to live. It's feeling. Some people talk about your head being the thing to go by, but it ain't so. . . . People have got to feel for themselves. . . . It's folks who let their head run them who make all the mess of living."

"Tobacco Road" is a novel without heroes. Its characters slouch about their affairs unreflectingly, like animals, and brutally, like peasants. "God's Little Acre" is heroic. Ty Ty, setting aside an acre of his land for God and digging feverishly for gold, year after year, has the nobility of character that comes from passion and assurance. "When you get God in your heart, you have a feeling that living is worth striving for night and day." As he believes in God, he believes in love. He better than any of the others understands the fierce attraction between Griselda and Will. Old and wise, he has never come to think of love as young folly. "If there's anything in the world He's crazy about, it's seeing a man and a woman fools about each other. He knows then that the world is running along as slick as grease."

It is with Ty Ty as a kind of chorus that Mr. Caldwell lifts the story of Will Thompson into tragedy. Seen in another light, he might have been regarded as a mill-town stallion, a brawling striker killed in a senseless enterprise. But for Mr. Caldwell Will is a hero of the people, who acts out what Ty Ty feels. Nor is he a mere poor white, land-bound and custom-ridden. He belongs to the mills, and he feels about them a passion like Ty Ty's for God and gold. He is a proletarian hero if American literature has ever had one.

Yet it is as difficult for an outsider as it is for Mr. Caldwell to find in his work any systematic, even any very conscious, doctrine. He has not shaped himself by reasoning and he does not make up stories to prove abstract points. He is seldom better than he is in such tales as Meddlesome Jack and Over the Green Mountains, which have in them a kind of traditional note. They somehow sound as if they had been invented a long time ago and cherished in the popular memory, waiting for the hand of art if it should chance upon them. Mr. Caldwell, handling these matters, partly goes back to a manner at least a hundred years old. Again and again he brings to mind the native humorists before Mark Twain, when American humor had not yet been sweetened but was still dry, blunt, and broad. Not that Mr. Caldwell must be supposed to have read their books. He now reads little and seems never to have read much. But in telling his folk-stories he has naturally taken over a manner which was ready for him. It suited the kind of stories the earlier humorists told, and he tells more or less the same kind. He has no critical doctrine which forces him to devise a new method when a good one is at hand. He would rather give his whole attention to his materials.

Nor is he doctrinaire in his general attitude toward life, which is so simple that it may be summed up as a love of human nature and a hatred of social artifice. Will Thompson is not a mouthpiece for revolutionary principles but a man exalted by love and rebellion. "I'm Will Thompson. I'm as strong as God Almighty, and I can show you how strong I am." He is heroic for his ecstasy, not for his valiant death in a specific cause. Old Ty Ty is fanatical and foolish, but he is heroic to Mr. Caldwell because he so incessantly loves life and so accurately sees what is alive and what is dead. It is in Mr. Caldwell's choice of heroes and in the boldness with which he speaks of their love and religion that he goes beyond any of the older humorists. Yet here too a way has been cut for him during twenty years of warfare between writers and censors in the United States. He does not parade his frankness. He takes it for granted that he and his characters may speak out. With a candor as truly made in America as his humor, he is free to write as well as he can about as much as he knows and feels. In the use he has made of his heritage and his opportunity he is a model for all young American novelists.

Flying Foxes and Others

By KAY BOYLE

Comb out your golden hair and whisper, monkeys, monkeys,
Come down the corridors of shade like evil children, monkeys,
Filch lice from such nocturnal beasts that sleep suspended,
Their wings folded, their heads hung downward, drugged
with plunder.
Finger the black-gloved hands that clasp the branches,
monkeys.

What is a bird but quiver to arrows, monkeys, monkeys,
That barb his flesh, target to filoplumes, monkeys,
Whose wounds he bears in every pore? But these sly moon-
lit foxes,
Furred russets or white, sleep as you stroke them, tittering.
The night arouses them like music the dancers, monkeys.
Such are decked out for flight as whores for love:
The chin-leafed bat bright orange, and the Indian
squirrel
Garish, with peacock's voice for saber in his teeth;
The lizards of Malay are richly dressed and like to
Butterflies enameled, but once they fold their wings
The animal itself has seemed to disappear;
Asiatic frogs with webbed silver feet, such emerald-
coated

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Beauties parachute from trees, and weave their aerial nests
In leaves above the water; pralangers, with limbs spread,
Skim the lower airs. Inhabitants of Bachan include
A little flying 'possum, a fruit-pigeon, big and elegant,
With metallic green and rufous plumage. (Captain John Smith
Wrote from Virginia in 1612: "An opossum hath a head
Like a Swine, and a taile like a Rat, and is of the bignesse of a Cat.")
The jungles of Borneo swarm with tree-leeches and flying frogs.
The swift there fashions of saliva his edible good nest.

Comb out your hair for the feet of the dancers, monkeys. monkeys,
For the foxes waking with muzzles lifted, monkeys,
To the rot of fruit, sweet but invisible, spicing the trails of the air.

American Virility and British Decadence

By ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

AS an illustration of the valuable results of that psychologico-historical criticism of which such brilliant examples have recently been offered by several American writers, I should like, in a modest way, to point out the particular significance of this type of criticism in the case of three great American writers and three hardly less great Englishmen. The three Americans are Daniel Defoe, George Noel Gordon Byron, and Thomas Carlyle; the three Englishmen are Ralph Waldo Emerson, H. W. Longfellow, and Henry Thoreau.

Daniel Defoe, born in the maritime town of Salem, Massachusetts, passing his middle years in Concord on the edge of the wilderness, and dying heroically with John Brown at Harper's Ferry, was peculiarly qualified to interpret all phases of American life. This best appears in his masterpiece, "Robinson Crusoe." The story moves on from the era of the clipper ships, commemorated at the outset, through the period of pioneering, and down to the Civil War, suggested in its tragic close. The central figure, Crusoe himself, is the finest embodiment of the American pioneer that is to be found anywhere in literature. Through the wreck of his ship on a desert island, he is thrown into that condition of isolation from his fellows in which the American dweller in the forest lived for half a century; he is the Daniel Boone of fiction. His leading traits are that extraordinary inventive capacity which has characterized the American throughout his career, an amazing ability to be a successful jack-of-trades, and finally a Yankee canniness which leads him to loot the wrecked ship of every ounce of food and machinery. The American looting of Nicaragua and Cuba is already foreshadowed in this magnificent Crusoe. Note also the accuracy of Defoe's description of the savages, as contrasted with the vague idealization of the Indian by the English romanticist, J. F. Cooper; Defoe's savages are cruel and treacherous, not scrupling to kill their own tribesman Friday when he becomes the white man's friend; in the death of Friday the defeat of the more peaceful Delawares by the ferocious Iroquois is clearly symbolized. I have not the space to show in detail how Defoe's further works illustrate other phases of American character: his splendid picture of American adventurousness in "Captain Singleton"; his concessions to American prudery in the forewords of "Roxana" and "Moll Flanders"; his inspired forecast of the gangster in "Colonel Jack."

George Noel Gordon Byron represents a later phase, the "Golden Day," of American life. Occupying a distinguished social position, he revealed in all his work that intense love of personal liberty for which the American upper classes have always been noted. The struggle was now not with the wilderness but with restraining laws and customs. His lines

I write this, reeling,
Seeming to stand upon the ceiling,

were a ringing challenge to prohibition. Hampered by an unhappy mother fixation which drove him, by transference, into his incestuous relations with his half-sister, he nevertheless succeeded, for the most part, in sublimating this passion into broader intellectual and spiritual interests. His "Childe Harold" expressed our national zeal for travel; "Don Juan" showed the early Spanish influence upon our culture; "Manfred" caught the spirit of our Western mountains. General Byron's noble speech when he led his little band of American heroes to Missolonghi to fight for Greek independence—"Nous voici, Demosthenes"—while it exhibited the unfortunate American tendency toward a confusion of tongues, voiced also our recognition of indebtedness to the dimly apprehended culture of the past. His pathetic dying words, "Only God can make a tree," show how at the last his mind reverted to thoughts of the American forest.

Thomas Carlyle, perhaps the greatest of all our American writers, united the temper of the Puritan with that of the captain of industry. First, last, and always, his gospel was the American gospel of action. Whereas the English Emerson chose to celebrate men of thought—Plato, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Goethe—our Carlyle eulogized Cromwell, Frederick, and Napoleon, eulogized them, it must be admitted, with a disregard of facts which no British scholar could have tolerated, but with a fine exaggeration, boisterous humor, and fantastic style which only our land of sectarians and cranks could possibly have produced. Furthermore, Carlyle's well-known sexual impotence seems aptly to symbolize that especial weakness of American life which Ludwig Lewisohn was the first to point out, as late as 1932, although it had been vaguely hinted at before by a few other American writers, such as Crane, Dreiser, Masters, Floyd Dell, Sinclair Lewis, Anderson, Fitzgerald, Cabell, Wolfe, Faulkner, and Dos Passos. With regard to Carlyle, Mr. Lewisohn well says: "Hopelessly crippled in the most vital and pervasive of human functions by a trauma sustained in infancy, a pseudo-aristocrat of Virginia [where, of course, Carlyle lived, at Charlotteputtoch] . . . greatly gifted, insanely sensitive . . . worthy of tears and not of taunts." Mr. Lewisohn is right. When we think of our Carlyle, we should weep and weep. And, above all, let there be no taunts. For not only our American sex bungling and vulgarity but also

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our American verve and dash and sense of power are expressed in Carlyle, our most characteristic man of genius.

How different are the British analogues of these writers! Emerson, product of the Oxonian idealistic tradition, lover of Plato and Plotinus, versed in Oriental mysticism, almost a quietist in his sense of the perfect whole, that quality which, as Mr. More, and also Mr. Foerster, well insists, is necessarily the product of a long-established tradition. Longfellow, the man of culture, the versatile linguist, the translator of Dante, so ignorant of America that he could attempt an Indian epic in the meter of the Finnish Kalevala and a domestic story of New England in classic hexameters. Thoreau, true son of the English Lake region, ever repeating, in his rural residence at Waldenmere, Wordsworth's summons to come to church in the vernal wood, and exhibiting that same weak spirit of pacifism shown in more recent times by Bertrand Russell, Bernard Shaw, and the students of the Oxford Union—a spirit fortunately almost unknown in our own virile land of fighters, which from the day of our first battle with the Indians has been a country of war and will continue proudly to prepare for war as long as a single Roosevelt remains alive.

On the one hand, in our American authors we see the exaltation of personal initiative and the energy of the explorer, we see power and virility (except in the unimportant matter of sex), and, on the other hand, in the British we perceive a cultured decadence, a condescending ignorance of other lands, and a pacifism which signifies exhaustion. Such thoughts will surely help to lead us farther on the happy path of economic nationalism. (Admitting indebtedness to many, but chiefly to Mr. Mumford and Mr. Lewisohn, for the method used above, I should add that any trifling inaccuracies are also illustrations of the method.)

Prelude

By CONRAD AIKEN

What without speech we knew and could not say
what without thought we did and could not change
violence of the hand which the mind thought strange
let us take these things into another world,
another dream

what without love we touched pronouncing good
what without touch we love and gave no sign
violence of spirit which only spirit knew divine
let us take these things into another world
another sleep

walk with me heliotrope, fly with me sparrow,
come beating of my heart and learn how life is narrow
how little, and ill, will be remembered by tomorrow
let us give our lives into another world
another hand

where like the rocks we shall be heaped forgetful
or waste away like stars in fiery stillness
no clock with mortal cry to speak our illness
let us take our deaths into another time
another god

come girl, come golden-breasted girl, and walk
on the so silent and sun-sandaled path
between the foremath and the aftermath
let us take our joy into another chaos, another wrath
and make it love

what without speech we knew we then shall say
and all our violence will there be gay
what without thought we do will be but play
and our unspoken love as bright as day
and we shall live.

Books

Death May Be Delightful

Some Turns of Thought in Modern Philosophy. By George Santayana. Charles Scribner's Sons. $1.75.

THE unity of the five essays which compose this little volume is chiefly that given to them by Mr. Santayana's mind and style. The several subjects are John Locke, Bradley, the new physics, a suggestion by Freud, and the philosophy of Julien Benda. Those familiar with Mr. Santayana's multitude of merits—his penetrating and relentless logic, his learning, his scornful wit, his gift for aphorism and for delightful and surprising turns of thought, and the lulling music of his prose—will hardly need to hear them rehearsed in these columns once more. Such readers need only to be assured that Mr. Santayana at seventy reveals no diminution in his powers or in the range of his interests. If one must admit that he also has defects (which this reviewer must, though always grudgingly), then it can be confessed that they are also here: his superciliousness, for example, and a certain gratuitous obscurity. I say gratuitous, because Mr. Santayana's gifts of expression are so extraordinary that he could never fail to make himself clear if that were always his foremost desire: there is never any real obscurity when he is thoroughly aroused, as, say, in his excoriating analysis of Henri Bergson's philosophy in "Winds of Doctrine." But his view of style is far from a purely instrumental one; he is like a pianist obscuring the melody or the structure of a composition by throwing in pure bravura passages, or like one of those ancient Chinese or Hindu sculptors, covering his edifice with the most elaborate and exquisite carvings, but neglecting its fundamental uses and proportions. Few living writers can handle individual sentences as dextrously as he can, but few seem to be so careless regarding the architecture of their essays. In the present volume the essay on Locke is the best example of this weakness. It opens with a delightful Stracheyesque portrait, but after that it is not always clear in what direction the author is carrying us. We are given a series of fragmentary and ruptive "supplementary notes" as long as the essay itself, and the tone is so uniform and ambiguous—a sort of sympathetic irony—that it is difficult to know in certain passages whether Mr. Santayana is agreeing with Locke, supplementing him, or confuting him.

The two papers in this volume that I found most interesting are those on the new physics and on Freud. Mr. Santayana's comments on the theory of relativity are in one sense merely those of a layman; but most of the new physicists, whether all of them recognize it or not, are also setting up as metaphysicians, and it is well to have their sometimes amateurish speculative flights examined by an expert. Mr. Santayana, however, does not deal with the religious apologetics of such writers as Eddington and Jeans; he prefers to make a criticism much closer to the heart of the new physical theories.

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These theories seem to him to be affected, and partly inspired, by a particular philosophy, "itself utterly insecure":

> This philosophy regards the point of view as controlling or even creating the object seen; in other words, it identifies the object with the experience or the knowledge of it: it is essentially a subjective, psychological, Protestant philosophy. . . . Yet . . . neither in logic nor in natural genesis can perspectives be the ultimate object of science, since a plurality of points of view, somehow comparable, must be assumed in the beginning, as well as common principles of projection, and ulterior points of contact or coincidence. Such assumptions, which must persist throughout, seem to presuppose an absolute system of nature behind all the relative systems of science.

The essay on Freud does not discuss the questions with which the famous psychoanalyst's name is chiefly associated, but a more general idea which appears in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." This is merely what is on its face the truism that "the goal of all life is death," and that the elaborate and highly organized life of man is merely a circuitous route to death. Santayana finds Freud's insistence on this point an admirable counterblast to such "prevalent follies" as, for example, Bergson's *élan vital*. Nor does he consider Freud's position pessimistic. "That the end of life should be death may sound sad: yet what other end can anything have? . . . An invitation to the dance is not rendered ironical because the dance cannot last forever." The transitoriness of things becomes sad only by virtue of a sentimental illusion, which makes us imagine that they wish to endure, and that their end is always untimely. But if all our instincts could be harmoniously satisfied, until our desires themselves began to ebb slowly and quietly away, "then doing and dying would coincide throughout and be a perfect pleasure."

HENRY HAZLITT

Romantic Decadence

Poor, Splendid Wings. By Frances Winwar. Little, Brown and Company. $3.50.

UNDER the florid verbiage of "Poor, Splendid Wings" lies the skeleton of an exciting chapter in literary history. Make the bones dance once more, for the story is not unfamiliar; it is so close to us, in fact, that the book itself serves as an anti-climax, the latest document in a study of romantic decadence that wheeled to its close at the end of the last century. Here is a lively, schoolgirl version of the Pre-Paphaelite text which has just received a $5,000 prize from the Atlantic Monthly Press. We are asked to enjoy it in the same mood that we read a summer novel, and yet we are also requested to accept it as literary history or biography. As fiction it has plot and adroit, sinuous movement; fragments of biography are neatly joined to fit a pattern, the pattern of a Paisley shawl revolving at high speed. With the unconscious logic of a prolonged day-dream every flaw of romantic fervor declining into bohemianism is exposed. If we are to take the book as history, then we can readily understand why the canvases of the P. R. B. are no longer to be treated with critical respect and why the latter phases of Swinburnian lyricism are now offensive to the ear. We must remember, however, that Frances Winwar is quite unconscious of the effect she has created, for in her author's note she says:

> This is not fictionized history or biography, though it read like a novel . . . For the first time Rossetti's two great loves are drawn from the pious mists of innuendoes and brought to light in an attempt to interpret his otherwise irreconcilable actions. Here, as elsewhere in the book, the author with no false modesty may claim the pioneer delving that struck buried gold.

Evidently she and her editors have already forgotten Violet Hunt's "The Wife of Rossetti," published as recently as last year. They have forgotten that if anyone deserves credit for striking "buried gold," the prize belongs to Violet Hunt. I make the personal reservation that such gold-digging is scarcely worth the effort, since it cannot change the aesthetic values of Rossetti's work; Miss Winwar's treatment of the story is far more revealing.

How, then, has she improved upon the material first discovered by the hysterical Violet Hunt? As I have already suggested, she has expanded the entire story and interwoven into it brief biographies of John Ruskin, Swinburne, Millais, Holman Hunt, Ford Madox Brown, Burne-Jones, Whistler, Buchanan, William Morris, and David Gray. The half-century of romantic decadence is unrolled like a map before our eyes—and where Miss Hunt is narrow and intense, Miss Winwar trips lightly, avoiding controversy by chanting praise of nearly everyone in a large company. All, all are gods. Even poor Haydon, whose bad painting never lived up to his grand intentions, whose poverty and bewilderment led to suicide, earns a wreath of greatness from Miss Winwar's hands. Surely Miss Hunt, though often quite mad, shows far deeper emotional and critical insight—but I must return to the book before me.

Samuel Rogers, the banker-patron of the arts, friend of Byron and Tom Moore, whose poetry was a bore to his contemporaries and was mercifully forgotten by posterity, is resurrected as a "splendid giant" of the eighteenth century. Laetitia Elizabeth Landon (1802-38), a precocious, vivid little journalist, a female Edgar Guest, who published many books of verse, who edited a magazine and wrote rhymed effusions as filler for its pages, is now called one of those "Victorian women, soul-awakened—'whose heart was breaking for a little love' . . . who sang before her song-time and died, her youth scarcely begun . . ." This is merely one of a number of cases where Miss Winwar's tears seem gratuitous, for the lady was over thirty-five and had written reams of copy covering a period of fifteen years. I cite these few minor errors of fact to show how thoroughly one is inclined to mistrust Miss Winwar's interpretation of the more important events in her narrative, down, through the various controversies of the P. R. B. and their enemies, to a feverish eulogy of David Gray, whose great misfortune was that his verse could never rise above a pale, flaccid imitation of John Keats.

What actually emerges from Miss Winwar's pages, illustrations and all, is groundwork for the following observations: that the great bulk of Pre-Raphaelite painting seldom if ever rose above the level of book illustration; that Dante Gabriel Rossetti's aesthetic values were seriously deflected by a theatrical attitude toward his work, both in painting and poetry, which led him to exploit unconsciously the growing popularity of the early romantics—this, by the way, is no charge against his personal life; that despite Dante Gabriel's deeper talent, Christina's poetry has a purity of line that deserves sane, unsentimentalized revaluation; that John Ruskin, for all his apparent weakness, was the strongest figure in the entire group and that his perceptions were by far the most profound; that decadence in romanticism follows the same curve that we have often observed in neo-classicism—both lead to a species of hedonism and in both cases the language of poetry has specious emotional quality.

If Miss Winwar's book does nothing else, it will serve to remind us that the charges brought against the powerful Pre-Raphaelite clique by W. E. Henley and John Churton Collins were not invalid. Miss Winwar is careful to omit mention of these two names, is careful to forget that these men placed the anti-Pre-Raphaelite controversy on a level that permitted more than a display of personal rancor and the expression of critical frustration.

HORACE GREGORY

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An Elaborate Imposture

The Italian Corporative State. By Fausto Pitigliani. London: P. S. King and Son. 15 shillings.

WE know very well the price which a country pays for fascism. Our memories of how fascism achieved power in Italy have been refreshed by the spectacle of the German counter-revolution. We have seen the destruction, not only of all those organizations, trade unions, cooperatives, and the like, by which the poorer members of society seek to better their lot, but of all that was highest in one of the great civilizations of the world. We have seen German science, music, and literature ravaged by carefully produced mob passions directed against the works and persons of all Jews, pacifists, and liberals: we have seen, in the words of the *Manchester Guardian's* Berlin correspondent, "the steep decline of a civilization that until only a few weeks ago was one of the highest in the world" (*Manchester Guardian,* April 19, 1933).

The world is less familiar, however, with the aims and objects of fascism. The Fascists themselves claim great "constructive achievements." They say that fascism offers us the true solution of our present problems. Fascism, they say, is a third "social order," distinct from either capitalism or socialism, though combining the best features of each. It sets up, the Fascists say, a new kind of economic system known as the "corporate state"; and this is the "practical" way of realizing those high promises of universal plenty which the Socialists and Communists have held out before the workers of the world.

It is exceedingly important that we should carefully examine this Fascist claim to constructive achievements. For it is by claiming that fascism is in some sense a "revolutionary" force, opposed to the existing capitalist system and proposing to substitute a new, less unjust, and less unstable system for it, that fascism is able, in certain circumstances, to gain mass support. Hence the present volume, which is on the whole the fullest account of the present organization of economic life in Italy yet published in England, is very useful.

We are justified in regarding Signor Pitigliani's book as an official account of the working of the corporative state, giving us the very most favorable picture which can possibly be drawn of the present condition of Italian economy. This is evident both from the sympathy and support for every Fascist institution shown by Signor Pitigliani and by the fact that he tells us that "throughout the preparation of this study it was necessary to work in close contact with certain officials of the Ministry of Corporations." This, in the condition of present-day Italy, is tantamount to an official Fascist imprimatur.

What, then, does the corporate state turn out to be? I recently evoked a great deal of skepticism by stating that not only did the institution of the corporate state leave capitalism, except in one particular, exactly as we know it today throughout the non-Soviet world; that not only would the various institutions which taken together are said to constitute a corporate state have, if they were established, no particular influence one way or another on a given capitalist economy; but that in Italy, after ten years of Fascist rule, the corporate state does not in fact exist at all. The corporations, which are the main entities of the corporate state, have never been established. The whole thing is a gigantic and ludicrously open piece of bluff such as the hand of Punchinello could alone have created.

Many opponents of fascism have themselves expressed the view that this was an exaggeration. They were more than willing to admit the evils and horrors of fascism, but surely, they have objected, it was not possible to deny that the Fascists in Italy had some constructive achievements to their credit? Surely they had succeeded, by means of the corporate state, in building up a more stable, if more servile, economy, free from the worst effects of boom and slump as we know them in the capitalist democracies? It will in future be possible to refer such critics to Signor Pitigliani's book. The admittedly astonishing fact that the famous corporations simply do not exist is fully confirmed by this official apologist of fascism.

Let us turn to Chapter IV, entitled Corporative Organizations, page 110, section 111, The Corporations in their Actual Working. The second sentence of the section tells us most of what we need to know. It reads: "Only a single corporation, viz., that of the stage, has so far been established in Italy." Truly, the choice of the theater, the eternal land of make-believe, as the sole field for the application of the Fascist policy for the regeneration of all human activity was perfectly appropriate.

We can, however, pursue farther our studies of these elusive things, the corporations. If we cannot study a corporation in action in any of the substantial fields of human endeavor, in any industry, great or small, in agriculture, in distribution, or in commerce, for the excellent reason that they do not exist, yet we can, either from Signor Pitigliani's pages or from that informed though now somewhat out-of-date work "Making the Fascist State," by Mr. Schneider, discover what a corporation would be like if it did exist. And it turns out that a corporation would be—were it established—a joint standing committee set up between the employers' organization and the Fascist trade union in any given industry. Thus, for example, the National Railway Wages Board of Great Britain, on which the railway companies and railway unions are represented and which meets periodically, would certainly be called a corporation—and no doubt hailed as "a revolutionary achievement"—if it existed in Italy. Indeed, the reason why such bodies have not been established in Italy, although they have been called for by numerous laws and decrees promulgated since April, 1926, is not clear. And it may be that some such bodies will eventually be established in the major Italian industries. But needless to say, they will, if they are established, do no more to modify the fundamental nature of Italian capitalism than does the Railway Wages Board to modify the nature of British capitalism. For the simple truth of the matter is, as anyone can now see for himself by reading Signor Pitigliani's book, that fascism *is* capitalism, and that the corporate state makes no important modification whatever in the existing capitalist structure of industry.

To a comic extent the corporative state is a matter of words. For example, we find on page 115 that in 1927 the name of the Italian chambers of commerce was altered to Provincial Economic Councils. But this was not "corporative" enough; so Signor Pitigliani announces that "by the Law of 18 June, 1931, No. 875, the epithet 'Corporative' was added to this title," and it became Provincial Corporative Economic Councils. And then, it seems, everybody felt happy.

But the Fascist regimes in Italy and Germany have made one real and important change in social relations. (This change was made in Italy by the Law of April 3, 1926, just before the elaborate imposture of the corporate state had been thought out.) And this change is the repeal of the workers' hardly won right to strike. Signor Pitigliani writes (page 87) that "the right to strike is a penal offense when three or more employees or workers leave their work, by preconcerted agreement, with the object of obtaining from their employers changed labor conditions." This is the one reality of Fascist economic policy. It involves some system for the arbitrary fixing of wages, since these are no longer left to the play of the market. Accordingly labor tribunals have been set up with the power to impose legally enforceable wage rates. The terms of reference for these tribunals are that "wages must correspond to (1) the normal requirement of life, (2) the possibility of production

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and (3) the labor output (page 52). "It is certainly no easy task," comments Signor Pitigliani, "to determine wage rates with the aid of the indications supplied by the Labor Charter and the other laws of the Corporative State" (namely, the laws embodying the above principles). We may readily agree with him. It must be about as easy as "finding a black cat in a dark room, that isn't there." What in fact happens is that the wages of Italian workers are kept down to the economic level, that is, to the subsistence level.

The rest of Signor Pitigliani's section on wages edifies with such remarks as the following: "Wage rates under the corporative system do not mean a decided leaning toward one or the other of the present tendencies to high or low wages" (page 54).

According to Signor Pitigliani's own table, printed on page 258, Italian wages have varied as follows.

Index figure for Italian hourly wage rates.

December	*July, 1928 to June,* 1929—100
1928	101.6
1929	102.1
1930	95.5
1931	89.5
1932	86.5

The "leaning" toward the present tendency to low wages seems to have been fairly "decided" after all. On page 54 the author admits that Italian wage rates are not in fact governed by the corporative system, but are, like wage rates everywhere else under capitalism, the sport of economic circumstances which the capitalists and their government are themselves quite unable to control. "The wages of a category cannot remain fixed at a very low level when the movement of production is upwards and business is prosperous, just as it is impossible for wages to be left at a high level when prices are dropping and business generally is falling off." We may remark also that of the 3,486,881 persons whom Signor Pitigliani classifies (page 147) as industrial workers in Italy, over one million are, according to the League of Nations, totally unemployed. This truly crushing percentage of unemployment shows that the corporative state has done nothing whatever to protect the Italian workers from the effects of the slump.

So much for the claim of the corporative system to introduce a new social order.

For the rest, the book consists for the most part of an account of the Fascist "occupational associations." This term means the Fascist trade unions and the Fascist employers' organizations. This section is vitiated by the omission of the fact that the Fascist trade unions, or "syndicates," as the translation, failing to translate, insists on calling them, are not genuine or spontaneous organizations of the workers at all. On the contrary, they are state organizations which were compulsorily imposed upon the Italian workers after all their own organizations had been destroyed by terror.

Another grave fault of the book is that time and again Signor Pitigliani mentions a matter of great importance and then withholds all essential information about it. Thus on page 58 we are told that part of the wage of an Italian worker "is frequently kept back, either to cover sureties required from the worker or as a contribution to the various insurance funds that are compulsory by law." What are these "sureties"? We are told nothing of them, yet their existence may make nonsense of all the safeguards which, it is claimed, insure that the worker will at any rate get the wages which his Fascist trade-union officials agree with his employer he shall have, or which the labor tribunal awards to him.

Again, on page 89, we are told that "strikes with political objects have been judged with great severity, as where, e.g., several drivers of public vehicles ceased work as a protest against an order of the Podesta (Court of Cassation 1st Penal Section, 8 February, 1929)." What was the order of the Podesta and what constituted "great severity"? We get none of the information which really matters.

The book is extremely difficult to read, both because the translation is execrable and because at least two-thirds of it consists of meaningless generalities. This is a pity, since it is one of the most effective pieces of Fascist self-exposure available in English.

JOHN STRACHEY

Literature and Industrialism

The Great Tradition: An Interpretation of American Literature Since the Civil War. By Granville Hicks. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

IT seems to me that even those who oppose Mr. Hicks cannot but pay tribute to the central virtues of this lucid and fruitful book. For whatever its shortcomings, it draws order out of chaos. It establishes an American tradition in literature which all of us can recognize. His opponents, I believe, must admit that the author's interpretation makes sense, though they may hate bitterly the kind of sense it makes.

The postulates are simple. The dominant movement in American life since the Civil War is the rise of industrialism. Since that movement is all-permeating, it is perfectly fair to relate the important writers of the period to it. We might relate them to other forces—sexual puritanism, materialism—but we are gradually coming to see that these forces are more cogently subsumed under industrialism than the reverse. Mr. Hicks's subtitle reads "*An* Interpretation." He attempts no godlike final estimates, no perfectly rounded surveys of his subjects. But the platform on which he stands offers him, one feels, a wider angle of observation than that, for instance, on which Mr. Lewisohn stands. Mr. Hicks omits reference to Whitman's homosexuality and stresses his sentiment of democracy and its contemporary application. Mr. Lewisohn gives us a very subtle piece of psychoanalysis; but when he has finished, the dynamic influence of Whitman is made no clearer. Hicks and Lewisohn are both partial interpreters; but Hicks is nearer the center, Lewisohn nearer the periphery. There are no omniscient critics.

I may be simple-minded, but I fail to see why you have to be a Marxist to realize that this book offers a coherent and reasonably satisfactory series of insights into our literature from Emerson to Dos Passos. Certainly the tradition of critical realism *is* the dominant one since 1865. Emerson, Whitman, Howells, Dreiser, Lewis, Dos Passos are all linked together by common sympathies and partially similar outlooks. What Mr. Hicks has done—with remarkable clarity and scholarship—is to show what these common sympathies are and to describe the state of development those outlooks achieved, in accordance with the limitations placed upon each man by his environment and his historical situation. Mr. Hicks's point of view enables him to deal equally pointedly—and not at all unsympathetically—with writers like Emily Dickinson, Willa Cather, Sarah Orne Jewett, who have chosen to retreat from the Industrial Age.

The author's literary judgments (with some reservations noted below) are not eccentric. Most liberal critics, even many highly conservative ones, will confirm his estimates of such men as Thoreau, Whitman, Henry Adams. The point is that he arrives at his estimates by a method which relates these men to the major environmental forces that produced them; and it is the method which furnishes us with new insights, rather than his final judgments.

In common with the gentlemen to my right, I do not believe that American literature culminates in John Dos Passos,

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much as I admire Dos Passos. But, then, Mr. Hicks does not say that it does: he is perfectly well aware that Melville is a greater novelist than Norris, though Norris concerned himself with the social struggle and Melville, except by implication, did not.

There is, of course, his notable last chapter, where his hopes perhaps betray him into an over-enthusiastic assessment of those contemporary writers who are imbued with the revolutionary point of view. I cannot conceive of any major fiction or important criticism from now on which fails to take into account the fact of the social struggle; but an awareness of that struggle, even a thorough understanding of it, will not of itself produce great writing or even good writing. Post-revolutionary Russian literature, though thoroughly realistic, seems to me also damnably dull. So far the Marxist insight has produced in America, in my opinion, one first-rate novelist (Mr. Dos Passos), one first-rate critic (Mr. Wilson), and three or four writers who are already important, among them Mr. Hicks. It is perfectly clear that Sinclair Lewis is still a far more interesting and able novelist than most of the left-wing writers. The point is that unless Mr. Lewis enlarges and deepens his point of view, he cannot possibly become *more* interesting (I refer you to "Ann Vickers"), whereas the left-wing writers—but only if they have talent and the faculty of self-criticism—are reasonably certain to become more interesting and important to our generation. And this is true whether or not you like the economic and political implications of their work. To that extent Mr. Hicks's enthusiasm is justified.

I recommend his brilliant book, not especially to those who agree in every detail with Mr. Hicks's convictions, but to those who are willing to reexamine American writing from a point of view so broadly based that all eccentricity, faddism, and literary impressionism are ruled out.

CLIFTON FADIMAN

A Poetess's Dog

Flush. A Biography. By Virginia Woolf. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.

MRS. WOOLF is so clever a person that she could think up answers to a caviler against this book as quickly as he could beg them, if not more quickly. I am sure, for instance, that even as she wrote it she reminded herself of the difficulties and dangers which beset her on every hand. She must have known that human beings cannot write the biographies of animals without being silly; to which, of course, there was the rejoinder that this was to be a biography by one remove of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, whose dog Flush would serve merely as a device for bringing the reader into a novel and special intimacy with the true protagonist. The story of the Brownings, that is to say, could thus be told by indirection, and Mrs. Woolf was ready to remind one that she had always worked by indirection. What, though, if the objection should be raised that not enough could be told in this way about Miss Barrett and her suitor? Why, to such an objection she could reply that she was writing about a dog after all, and dogs know very little about their mistresses. She could point to the chapters which have relatively little to do with Miss Barrett—to the fourth, for instance, wherein Flush languishes for several days as the miserable guest of a Whitechapel dog thief, and wherein the story becomes a costume piece of the 1840's, as indeed it does elsewhere. Or, finally, she could smile and say that her intention was obscure and precious, and that if you failed to discern it you might at least inquire whether the book were pleasantly and ingeniously written, and whether in its own fashion it deserved to be called interesting.

It is certainly well written, in Mrs. Woolf's most brittle and at the same time flowing manner—like glass which has been blown by magic into unimaginable curves. Mrs. Woolf has never written better than this. But it is also true that she has never had less to say. Her triumph is trivial, for at the best she has delicately avoided danger. And at the worst she has erred—oh, most delicately—by pretending to know a bit too much about Flush's thoughts as he lay at Miss Barrett's feet and wondered about the hooded man with the lemon-yellow gloves who came in the afternoon for two hours and left the invalid so oddly transformed. His speculations as he lies there are quite too much to the point—of a biography of Miss Barrett. And yet it is the biography of a dog. Mrs. Woolf is so intelligent that she has proved the impossibility of the very task she set for herself. She has proved that the silence of animals had better be respected. To which she can be imagined saying: Such was my intention.

MARK VAN DOREN

A Novel of Revolution

Three Cities. By Sholom Asch. Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $3.

THREE cities, three tense periods in Russia's dramatic, twentieth-century history, and the two classes into which the Industrial Revolution had split the Jews are dealt with in this novel. The cities and the periods are St. Petersburg in the commercial and industrial expansion after 1905, Warsaw during the pre-World War years of unrest which probably determined the Czarist decision for war to divert the Russian masses from rebellion, and Moscow during and after the October revolution. The two classes are the fawning Jewish millionaires who intrigued for, married for, and paid for Russification to make themselves safe and powerful in a hostile society, and the Jewish workers, also seeking a secure future, but an honorably unprivileged one in a classless proletarian state.

The Petersburg section of the book exposes the brilliant but morbid society of the Jewish haute-bourgeoisie. The chief figure in it is the advocate Halperin, in whose cunning Jewish brain Russians even more than Jews have a fanatical faith. Halperin diversifies his well-paid practice with occasional non-paying racial and liberal cases, not without a shrewd if unconfessed calculation of their advertising value, in the manner of some celebrated American lawyers who have also known how to profit from benevolence. Halperin has a beautiful wife, his elegant social front, around whose decorative figure is arranged a luxurious home, in which an antique-collecting beau is in constant attendance to make her a completely fashionable Petersburg matron. Their lovely daughter Nina is being swiftly and stylishly corrupted at "aesthetic" affairs where decadent artists of every variety teach the upper-class voluptuaries to take a new sanction for their orgies from the newly sanctified name of Art. Their son, Misha, a beautiful boy, becomes a sensualist almost before his senses have matured. A frequenter of the household through his position as one of Halperin's assistants is Zachary Mirkin, son of Gabriel Haimovitch Mirkin, multi-millionaire, who has his actress-mistress like any Grand Duke, and who, when his insulted wife leaves him in protest, allows his son to grow up motherless. Many subsidiary characters appear and are well drawn.

Young Zachary Mirkin is the central character of the novel as a whole. He is a bad choice. The events of a revolutionary era are better understood in the character of a man of will than in that of a man without will. The actual revolutionist is allowed to become unreal, a legendary figure, and the movements he directs are allowed to become foamy and formless like the helpless churn of fantasy in a Zachary Mirkin's mind.

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The source of Zachary's weakness is given explicitly enough; but it serves to obscure the major motive of a revolution, the struggle for a social system wherein all men may find not only physical security but psychological security, since all men may be sure of counting for something. Zachary, however, who has suffered all his life from the shock of separation from his mother, looks to the revolution, not to give him a responsible and active place in society, but to mother him. The revolution is to be for him, as for all the weak and helpless, a sheltering, warming, protective mother. And he seeks mothering not only in the abstract but in the flesh. Large, ripe, confident, deep-bosomed women attract him irresistibly. Nina Halperin becomes his fiancee, but though the marriage is not carried through, Zachary consummates a liaison with her mother. The woman revolutionist from Warsaw, Rachel Leah, with her maternal body and mothering ways, draws him to Warsaw, where he enters the revolutionary party and returns, at the same time, to his own race, the poor Jews whom his father and his father's kind have repudiated in the effort to be more Russian than the Russians. For a time the unknown vastness of the revolution, pregnant with a new society, sublimates his passion for matrons, but later, though he has become engaged in the meanwhile to the gentle, girlish Hélène, daughter of Rachel Leah, he follows the large-breasted, commanding, maternal sister, Sosha, who is the true inheritor of Rachel Leah's energy.

Alongside this weak, maimed personality, the revolutionists who appear in the third volume, which describes Moscow during the crisis of the revolution, are drawn in incredible terms. Their hardness and inhumanity, their dreadful insensitiveness, make a good foil for an author who mothers too much his motherless hero; but they are unreal and unconvincing. It is at this point that Mr. Asch, stepping out as a philosopher to rationalize his defense of the individual, fails chiefly as a writer. The narrative stops and drags; characterization takes on the rigidity of something on a map. And the philosophy is as poor as the writing, for it is no more than a succession of pulpy metaphors. Ultimately Mr. Asch is excusing weakness and defending cowardice. These are clearly enough handled as long as they are handled in direct narrative, but the formal analysis of them could better have been left to the psychologist.

So far as the chief function of this work is concerned, therefore, as a picture of a society in revolution, it fails at the decisive moment. It draws the rottenness of prerevolutionary society in all the lurid phosphorescence of decay; it draws the prerevolutionary activities of the revolutionists with firmness and vigor. But at the miracle of the revolution itself the author falters; he will not see its human face, but shrinks terrified from it, as at the appearance of monsters who have depersonalized themselves and become suddenly savage and cruel.

Except for this fall into philosophy in the middle of the third volume, the book is structurally a fine achievement. As a portrayal of Jewish life it is continuously striking and interesting. Some of its scenes are, in fact, passages of major writing: the dinner in the first volume, where Halperin convinces himself and his guests that the Jews are the best Russians; the description of the tree in the tenement back yard in the Warsaw volume and the terrifying May Day in the same volume; the picture of the Jewish money-men triumphantly floating the New Russia Company which is to buy back Russian properties from foreigners scared by the Kerensky revolution, and pay for it with stock issued to the people, who will thus become "collaborators" in the great enterprise; the picture of the gradual demoralization of the aristocrats beseiged in a luxurious hotel. Passages like these would alone be enough to make the book memorable; they testify to Mr. Asch's great gifts. It is a pity that a mistaken and unnecessary defense of individualism was permitted to mar so fine a book. In undertaking such a defense Mr. Asch followed the mawkish tradition of the last generation of novel-writers, who concerned themselves with sensitive weaklings broken by harsh realities. We have come to the end of that phase.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

How "Peace" Was Made

Peacemaking. By Harold Nicolson. Houghton Mifflin Company. $4.50.

YEAR by year the indictment of the peacemakers of 1919 piles up. Gradually every one of the defenses of the Big Five is broken down, their excuses for their betrayal of mankind shown up in all their falsity. The glacier-like sweep of the economic forces which the war and the treaty released has crushed the pretensions of the Versailles architects of disaster. But year after year eyewitnesses come forward to give their testimony on the moral breakdown of the defenders of democracy, freedom, and the rights of small nations, the opponents of militarism. The latest of these witnesses is Harold Nicolson, from whose brilliant pen we have come to expect remarkable books. This one is no disappointment. It is highly entertaining, informed, extraordinarily illuminating, often amusing, and enlivened by personal experiences, not only with the Big Five, but with lesser figures as well. As history, this picture of how history was made in 1919 will be an indispensable source book for future historians.

Harold Nicolson was himself one of the Foreign Office experts assigned to the British peace delegation as all-knowing advisers on certain subjects and states. Concerning his competency he entertains doubts enough not to take himself too seriously, as is shown by this note from his diary on May 16, 1919: "He [A. J. Balfour] is very critical. 'These three ignorant men,' he exclaims, 'with a child to lead them.' The child, I suppose, is me. Anyhow, it is an anxious child. And one who does not want to have anything to do with leadership in this matter." Yet Nicolson, like other junior officials, found himself on occasion responsible for certain decisions of profound import. He went to Paris steeped in the common British Liberal belief that Wilson was to be the world's savior—God-sent—and wholly devoted to the Wilsonian principles. He came out of the conference feeling—well, let him describe it in his own words:

> I find Headlam Morley standing miserably in the littered immensity of the Galerie des Glaces. We say nothing to each other. It has all been horrible. . . . Celebrations in the hotel after it. We are given free champagne at the expense of the taxpayer. It is very bad champagne. Go out on to the boulevards afterwards. To bed, sick of life.

This after watching the complete triumph of the Allies!

Again, he writes to his future wife: "I have been working like a little beaver to prevent the Austrian treaty from being as rotten as the German. The more I read the latter the sicker it makes me." And to his father on June 8:

> Yet the real crime is the reparation and indemnity chapter [of that treaty], which is immoral and senseless. There is not a single person among the younger people here who is not unhappy and disappointed at the terms. The only people who approve are the old fire-eaters. I have tried, with the help of the treasury man, who is first class, to water down the Austrian financial clauses, but was told by Sumner to mind my own business. Anyhow I think we shall, provided Lloyd George wins his battle, get the Germans to sign. God help us if we can't! They will have us at their mercy.

But the old men had their way. We editors of *The Nation* used to be denounced in 1919 for calling them the "wicked old

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men," but here is Harold Nicolson's view of the great, the noble A. J. Balfour, under whom he did most of his work:

> Go round to A. J. B. after luncheon [May 15, 1919]. And talk to him for a whole hour in this sense. I attack the moral aspect of partitioning Asia Minor. He is tiresome about it. "All that," he says, "is quite true. But, my dear young man, you forget that we are now at the Paris Conference. All you say is pure aesthetics." What is wrong with these experienced statesmen is that they are so used to justifying expediency on moral grounds that they are not convinced by immorality even when it is inexpedient.

As for Woodrow Wilson, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation had better not add this book to its library. I am so constantly accused by a few readers of *The Nation* of harboring a bitter enmity for President Wilson that I wish all my critics could read this book, as well as that wonderful character sketch of Woodrow Wilson drawn by Maynard Keynes, which is so utterly destructive, so entirely correct, so completely unanswerable. Mr. Nicolson's characterization does not compare with Mr. Keynes's, but their judgments are the same. In explaining how it was that Mr. Wilson fell in Paris Nicolson says:

> [Clemenceau and Lloyd George] knew that Mr. Wilson would never face the fact that his own American people had let him down. They knew that in order to disguise that fact from himself he would submit to any humiliation. They knew that one way to manage Wilson was to threaten to, and then to refrain from, showing him up. The conceit and egotism of Mr. Wilson must, of course, be admitted: yet these were but as straws upon the deep current of his faith. It was his faith which they exploited. His faith in The People and in God. They knew that it would be excruciating for him to admit that neither of these two illusions played any part in the Peace Conference. President Wilson was destroyed, not by his faults, but by his virtues.

But Mr. Nicolson does not take stock for one moment in the Ray Stannard Baker representation of the conference—he dubs the great defender of Wilson an "American propagandist" who saw the conference as a "conflict of the Powers of Light (represented by President Wilson) with the Powers of Darkness (represented by M. Clemenceau)." Nothing, he says, was clear-cut in Paris. "The whole business, as Mr. Balfour remarked, was, after all, a rough and tumble affair." The Wilson visits to England and to Italy he calls "these regrettable and hysterical visits." They convinced Woodrow Wilson, he says, "that the people of Europe were with him heart and soul. Here was a most misleading conviction." But here I would take exception. I was in London myself, and Manchester, too, when Woodrow Wilson arrived, and I was at the Peace Conference, and I cannot but feel that the peoples were with Mr. Wilson. The chief reason why he failed was that he did not make good his veiled threat at the opening session of the Peace Conference to go behind the statesmen. Mr. Nicolson admits that President Wilson could have triumphed by driving Lloyd George and Clemenceau from office, but he feels that America would not have supported Mr. Wilson had he done so. Here, too, I think he is wrong, but it is just my judgment against his, with the fact in my favor that I knew American public opinion well and Mr. Nicolson did not. The truth is that Mr. Wilson held every card in the pack. The Allies were absolutely dependent upon him for money, three billion dollars of the Allied debts now owed to us were advanced by us *after* the Armistice; we had the greatest military force in France, and Mr. Wilson himself was the dominating figure in Europe. He failed at the very outset because he did not insist that the Allies live up to their plighted word in the Armistice agreement with the Germans, signed by Robert Lansing on behalf of them all. The minute he yielded there he lost the whole battle. The rest of the Big Five had taken his measure. They knew that they had him. They knew that his virtues as well as his weaknesses could be breached. They played upon those weaknesses; they wore him down all the more easily because he was so terribly ignorant of the problems with which he had to deal, because his conceit and egotism kept him from realizing how little he knew. Had he only ordered the George Washington to get up steam at the first session of the Big Five, had he only ordered Pershing to set his troops marching out of Germany, and notified the American Treasury that there would be no more advances to the Allies, his associates of the Big Five would have collapsed. There was no other way out for them. The fate of the world was placed in the hands of Woodrow Wilson. He failed utterly, and in doing so destroyed the faith of millions all over Europe who believed that they saw in him the Savior come to earth again.

But one must not end a review of this remarkable book on such a somber note. There are too many delightful and amusing touches in it. Some of his characterizations are wickedly good, as for example this:

> Lunch at the Meurice with [Herbert Bayard] Swope, an American correspondent. He bursts with boost. He is very vulgar. He is a nice man. My liking for the Americans is becoming a vice. I like the scholarly sort, such as Coolidge, Seymour, Day, and Allen Dulles, because they are quiet and scholarly, and because they like the truth. I also have a weakness for the noisy sort, such as Swope, because he is so unlike myself. I feel like a mouse much impressed by a jaguar.

And this delicious description of the way Alwyn Parker organized the British delegation to the Peace Conference and "carefully considered the dangers and temptations to which we might be exposed." He was especially concerned with protecting the delegation from (a) espionage, and (b) disease. As to (a) he organized a "security service" with the result that

> . . . although it was easy enough to get out of the Majestic [hotel] it was extremely difficult to get in. Many a foreign statesman was detained on suspicion for daring to press beyond our portals. . . . In order to cope with (b) he had engaged an obstetric physician of the greatest distinction. The female staff were placed under the direction of a chaperone. The atmosphere of the Majestic was in this way one of cheerful and comradely Anglicanism.

Surely this book is priceless.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

A Distinguished American

Along This Way. By James Weldon Johnson. The Viking Press. $3.50.

PROBABLY no circumstance in the full and fortunate life of James Weldon Johnson was more fortunate than his being born in the year 1871. For even in Florida this meant for a Negro boy being born in one of the most hopeful periods of our history. Reconstruction was in full swing; Jim Crow laws were as yet unknown. Probably in no other period could a Jacksonville Negro have enjoyed a boyhood so serene and normal, so full of diverse interests and activities, so little clouded by the consciousness of race differences and race prejudice. To this situation other factors also contributed, among them the fact that his father was born a freedman in Virginia, and that his mother was a school teacher from Nassau. Both were persons of substance and intelligence who enjoyed the

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respect of the community. The happy result was to give to Johnson and his brother an unusual degree of confidence and courage in following their individual bents, in seeking adventure and developing their numerous talents. It gave them the start that carried them to eminently successful careers, through the bitter post-reconstruction years—when, in Johnson's words, "the civil status of the Negro had fallen lower than it had been at any time since the Civil War"—and into the Negro renaissance, in which, both as a writer and as the secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Johnson was to play so prominent a part.

It is impossible to condense into the space of a review an adequate account of Johnson's many-sided career. He has sketched it in leisurely fashion in this mellow book, with a wealth of humorous and affectionate detail. He attended Atlanta University, then an institution of singularly lofty if narrow ideals, whose students "were never allowed to entertain any ideal of themselves as 'go-getters.'" Most of them looked forward to a life-work of underpaid teaching. Johnson himself one summer taught in a rural school in Georgia at a salary of five cents a pupil for each day of the pupil's attendance. Later he became principal of the Stanton grade school in Jacksonville and developed it into a high school. He studied law and was admitted to the Florida bar; he wrote verse and started a daily newspaper which lived for eight months. He followed his brother Rosamond to New York, and together they crashed the gates of the theatrical world. For several years thereafter—in partnership with the gifted Bob Cole—they literally "wrote the songs of a nation," the popular songs that everyone knew and sang.

In 1905 Johnson entered the diplomatic service under Roosevelt, serving as consul in Venezuela and Nicaragua, and resigning when it became clear with Wilson's election that a colored man could not hope for further advancement in that service. In 1916 he joined the staff of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as field secretary, and later, as executive secretary, directed the famous campaign for the Dyer anti-lynching bill, which for the first time made lynching a national issue and front-page news throughout the country. In 1925 he was awarded the Spingarn Medal, "the most distinguished badge of merit that an American Negro may wear." He edited the two widely popular books of Negro spirituals arranged by his brother and the "Anthology of American Negro Poetry"; he wrote, among other things, the memorable volume of poems, based on Negro sermons, "God's Trombones." In 1929 he resigned from the association to accept the chair of creative literature at Fiske University. He is a trustee of Atlanta University, and has been president of the board of directors of the American Fund for Public Service. This list does not by any means exhaust the honors that have come to him.

Such a career gains an added significance, of course, because it is that of a Negro, of a man whose work brought him honors and acclaim, but who might on a theatrical tour be refused a meal or a night's lodging because of his color; of a man who, though probably Jacksonville's most distinguished citizen, narrowly escaped being lynched in that city because he was seen in a public park with a woman supposed to be white. He was saved on this occasion by his coolness in the face of danger and by the technicality that, according to the Florida *mores*, the woman was *not* white, having the necessary, though invisible, drop of black blood that made her colored. This man has surmounted the obstacles of race and at the same time achieved eminence partly because of them. Yet he is still hampered by race, in so far as prejudice forces upon him preoccupation with the problems of a minority rather than with the whole field of human interests.

MARTHA GRUENING

HITLER'S autobiography, MY BATTLE, is now available in English at $3.00

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God's Country

Seeds of Revolt. By Mauritz A. Hallgren. Alfred A Knopf. $2.50.

Life in the United States. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

THE reader who is interested in a concise and faithful report of the way in which the depression has affected the American people will find it in Mr. Hallgren's book. He will also learn, in case he needs to be told, that the crash of 1929 was no inexplicable breakdown of an economic machine which had been running smoothly until that time. The prosperity of the boom years was spotty and artificial. Mr. Hallgren brings out the fact that in 1927 "more than 35 per cent of the American people were living at or below the border line of physical and moral security, while another 25 per cent were living at the 'minimum comfort' level." This, being interpreted, means that monopoly capitalism had pretty well destroyed the domestic market. The foreign market was being busily cut off by the economic nationalism of this and other countries. Monopoly capitalism had taken advantage of the resultant collapse to throw the burden of its losses on the taxpayers while it increased its holdings at bargain-counter prices, and to reduce employment and wages while it increased dividends—all the while holding its pocket handkerchief before its streaming eyes and proclaiming its sympathy for the sufferings, its approval of the fortitude and patience, of the dispossessed.

The sympathy, however, lasts only so long as the patience; and the patience is expected to withstand intolerable exasperation. Mr. Hallgren not only reports the desperate situation of farmers and industrial workers; he also describes the ugly tactics employed against them by the owning oligarchy and its political representatives whenever they dare to manifest their discontent. The massacres of Dearborn and Herrin, the use of armed force against striking farmers, lynchings both official and unofficial of Negroes driven to desperation by their wrongs—such outrages have become as familiar in the news reports of the past four years as refunds of federal taxes to the owning oligarchy. And one finishes Mr. Hallgren's account of them with the feeling that if American workers were even half as class-conscious as American owners, we should be very near to revolution.

That we are not may be partly due to want of revolutionary leadership, as Mr. Hallgren suggests. But the want of leadership is not adequately accounted for by his strictures upon the isolationist policy of the Communists, their abject dependence on Moscow, and their internecine warfare. Revolutionary leadership implies a potential revolutionary following; and as yet such a following does not exist in this country, for reasons which Benjamin Stolberg adduced in these columns a few weeks ago. Mr. Hallgren remarks that among the thousands of jobless workers with whom he has talked the vast majority were "utterly cold to communism as a way of life." Under the circumstances it is perhaps unfair to be too severe upon the Communists for getting their revolutionary inspiration from Moscow; after all, it must come from somewhere.

Thanks to this coldness of the masses toward any really revolutionary idea, effective protest against the depredations of monopoly capitalism has been strictly petty bourgeois. Mr. Hallgren deals at length with the schemes of liberal fixers for eating our cake and having it—schemes such as the late unlamented Technocracy and the myriad economic plans hopefully designed to make omelets without breaking eggs. The new Administration represents this protest, and it seems to be rapidly proving Mr. Hallgren's contention that it is powerless to halt the decline of the petty bourgeoisie. Mr. Hallgren regards it as incipient fascism; possibly he would modify that view if he were writing now, for in the past two months it has become pretty clear that the Administration is trying to organize labor not for monopoly capital but against it. In other words, Mr. Roosevelt seems to be trying to prove his contention that the government can "check and counterbalance" the owning oligarchy—in this instance by setting up a strong labor movement to offset the enormous increase in power granted to monopoly capitalism through the suspension of the Sherman Act. He will fail of course, because the attempt implies a neutral state acting as arbiter between these two opposing forces. His friends the economic planners have not, apparently, enlightened him concerning the nature of the state—probably for the excellent reason that they do not know anything about it. He will no doubt be enlightened eventually by the owning oligarchy. But a struggle between the owning oligarchy and the federal government over the government's attempt to foster labor unions is not fascism; nor is the injection of new life into a moribund labor movement by federal statute.

To quarrel with Mr. Hallgren about certain definitions and interpretations is not to impugn the value of his book. It is not only readable but well worth reading. As a pendant to it, the collection of stories published by Scribner's under the title "Life in the United States" takes on a special interest. These are stories of actual experience selected from some 4,500 submitted in a prize contest conducted by *Scribner's Magazine;* and they range from mere anecdote to stories with profound social implications such as Oklahoma Race Riot, The Jersey Devil Came, Five Kids from the East Side. According to the publishers' note, the editors of *Scribner's* "hoped by appealing directly to those who were not professional writers to discover a more wholesome and contented picture of life than the work of the foremost writers suggested"; the theory being, one assumes, that successful writers become morbid and embittered—or that morbid and embittered writers become successful. They got—if the published stories are any criterion—what Mr. Hallgren might have told them to expect, a picture chiefly of grimness and frustration. And it does not require any theory to account for that—nothing, indeed, beyond the old adage that figs don't grow from thistles.

SUZANNE LA FOLLETTE

The "Lost Generation"

Testament of Youth. By Vera Brittain. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

DURING the lull after a literary deluge of experiences of the last war and rising warnings against the coming chemical extinction of mankind, books of this sort assume a greater significance. They are written by that "lost generation," invisibly marked with the shadow of death and destruction. The whole tragedy of a hoary youth without the exciting self-assurance of a "barbarian heroism," the bitterness of its sorrow and frustration, carry far more striking agitation against a new massacre than do the glowing tales of trench moles. Vera Brittain's story is the average story of a million individuals during the war: the conventional middle-class home in rural England, a meager adolescence, a short period at Oxford, and then the beginning of the war. Her fiance is drafted and killed, her brother and their friends follow soon after, and Miss Brittain enlists as a nurse. Her hospital experiences in London, Malta, and France take up the greater part of the book.

For fifteen years Vera Brittain, poet and author of several novels, intended to write the story of her generation, fully exposing all the horrors which culminated in a sullen determination "never to forget." But time and distance had to be gained for an objectivity which released repressions and enabled her to

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relate her modest experiences to the great catastrophe. We can understand therefore the expansion of this human document into a voluminous opus. For the shock of those four years proved too reverberating an experience not to create within the writer a constant fear that the omission of the slightest incident might weaken the impression upon the reader of the hopelessness of that time—a time, as it were, when nursing mutilated bodies back to life seemed far more comforting than the sheltered life between optimistic victory headlines and ever-growing casualty lists.

It is an ambitious work. The 660 pages are divided into many sections and chapters, mottoed with poems by the author, her fiance, and other writers, and span a period from early girlhood to the, after all, happy ending, many years after the war. Vividly written in passages, it contains much valuable material. There are descriptions of battle scenes in France and of the Zeppelin horror over London, accounts of active service in hospitals, college life in Oxford, post-war political activity, and travel for the League of Nations. Yet one can only state with regret that it has not the importance one would wish for such a book, nor does it remain a stirring, unforgettable experience. It is throughout a personal account of a personal life, full of trivial incidents and diffuse meditation; never does it penetrate and define the intoxication and morbidity of a whole generation. Neither passion nor inspiration touches the many pages of solid type; cold reasoning permeates all matters of sentiment and emotion. Indeed, the Testament of Youth has still to be written of a generation that stayed at home but was none the less the victim of mass murder and the moral collapse that followed in its train.

FRED J. RINGEL

Notes on Fiction

Bonfire. By Dorothy Canfield. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

Dorothy Canfield's knowledge of Vermont is authentic and intimate. Unlike many sectional rural novelists she is not committed to an idyllic formula, a sordid, or a humorous one, but faces the idyllic, the sordid, and the humorous aspects of her subject candidly, with a vigorous and flexible realism. The pity is the greater that, knowing as much as she does and seeing as clearly, she rarely troubles to lift her writing above the level of comfortable woman's-magazine fiction, even though her conclusions about life are far deeper, more searching, and less complacent than such a label suggests. Primarily she is not interested in writing for its own sake but in the story she has to tell, and she is still capable of feeling a warm and generous interest in the lives and problems of the characters she creates. These problems are to her absorbingly real and she labors over them with insistence and detail, with results which are not always happy. There is much in this story of Vermont character and background to make it worth reading—acute and sensitive observation of character, a convincing feeling for the beauty of the Vermont countryside, and an occasional profundity of knowledge and experience. These might have made it memorable if only the writer had been a more sensitive and selective artist.

Night Over Fitch's Pond. By Cora Jarrett. Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50.

One seldom reads a novel that combines the elements of a good mystery story with those of psychological drama. Cora Jarrett's book begins with a suicide and ends with the reasons for that suicide. Her characters are college professors and their wives and she knows them well. Her scene, Fitch's Pond,

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Next Week in *The Nation!*

WHY FORD WORKERS STRIKE

by

CARL M. MYDANS

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is the summer camp of these intellectuals. Here the tragedy takes place. Here, in one night, the most sensitive and imaginative of her characters unravels the mystery. Mrs. Jarrett writes very well. She has an extraordinary insight into the minds of rather complex men and women. Her novel is well constructed, its scene and its characters are fully drawn. The author has not lived among college professors for nothing. Nor has she known their wives without discovering what such women may be like. Mrs. Jarrett has been writing short stories under the pen name of Faraday Keene. The present novel is the first book she has published under her own name. In it she has proved herself a competent writer and a clever student of human nature.

Ordinary Families. By E. Arnot Robertson. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

E. Arnot Robertson is one of those fortunate writers who can waive all forms of experimental expression and experimental emotion, and work effectively in the most conventional patterns. Incidental to this history of an English family given to much amateur sailing, she deftly satirizes many aspects of the present scene—modern education, highbrow art, Bohemian self-righteousness. Her method is never to exploit a situation to its fullest possibilities, and yet never to assume an air of strained and self-conscious reticence. Her writing has a quality of graceful and unassuming wit that achieves the miracle of outdistancing the more pretentious stride of many of her contemporaries.

To a God Unknown. By John Steinbeck. Robert Ballou. $2.

This book reads like a novelized version of a Robinson Jeffers poem, and its setting is what may be known to tourists of the future as the "Robinson Jeffers country." It is the story of a Yankee Abraham who has emigrated to California and who, in obedience to the voice of his God which is the earth and the fulness thereof, sacrifices his wife and ultimately himself on the altar of fertility. In the bas-relief of a poem, where much is taken for granted, the characterization of the story might have been adequate, but in a novel, which demands treatment in the round, it is pitifully thin and shadowy and invalidates the most ambitious effects of the book.

Other Brief Notices

Democracy, Debts, and Disarmament. By Walton Newbold. E. P. Dutton and Company. $3.

This is one of the most cruel, most penetrating, and most valuable studies of the world crisis yet published. Unlike Sir Arthur Salter and others, Mr. Newbold expounds no favorite theories, sets up no straw men in the realm of currency or trade to knock down in order to prove his case. Nor does the author start from scratch in the sense that he believes that there was once a truly normal period and that all we have to do is to find our way back to the standards of that period. Instead, he digs deep into the history of finance and world trade. He traces monetary theory and the gold standard back to "the age of Amsterdam," or rather begins with that period and shows how the economics of modern capitalism have developed until they have brought us to the mess we are now in. The author, moreover, sees the world picture as a complete whole, something few students in recent years have been able to do. He connects events that appear to have little if any connection. For example, he shows, plausibly and convincingly, that the bank holiday in Michigan and Stalin's arrest of the British engineers were not unrelated events. To Mr. Newbold, democracy, intergovernmental debts, and disarmament, all intricately interwoven, are hopeless problems. He does not specifically say that they cannot be solved under capitalism, but he marshals up a wealth of factual evidence that they cannot be so solved.

Giacomo Puccini: The Man—His Life—His Work. By Richard Specht. Translated by Catherine Alison Phillips. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.75.

Musically inclined readers seeking a rationalization of their fondness for Puccini's operas will find it here, together with a sagacious estimate of the composer's qualities both as artist and man. Richard Specht is a musicographer whose judgments have weight, and this book avowedly presents the *amende honorable* for his earlier pronouncements that the creator of "La Bohème" was "the great corrupter, the very negation of an artist, a merely theatrical composer striving after nothing but effectiveness, and the incarnation of modern degeneracy and insincerity." Reasons for the complete reversal of these censures form the warp for an interesting biography which is nicely balanced between the critical and the anecdotal. If the author's desire to atone for injustice urges him at times a little too far into the rhetoric of praise, one pardons the excess because of the generosity behind it. The eulogist has not overpowered the critic in Herr Specht, and he has a sharp eye for flaws in technique and limitations of talent. He attributes the charm of the operas to Puccini's emotional candor and his gift for infusing vitality into the commonplaces of existence. Behind the outward naivete and frankness of character he detects an introspective and melancholy nature with a psychopathic strain of cruelty.

Toward a United Front. By Leon Samson. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

Why is it that many students who really have something to say must bury their argument under a style that wearies and annoys the reader? Mr. Samson repeats himself again and again. Not only is there a needless repetition of argument, often in the same paragraph, but Mr. Samson has three or four pet phrases—one of them is "I repeat"—which he works to death before he gets to the end. And he has a way of sneering at persons whose ideas he cannot accept which suggests that he is not entirely sure of his own ideas. Yet his central thesis is sound and worth serious discussion. Briefly, he contends that the problem of a united working class in America is largely dependent for solution upon solid knowledge of the American mind. He has discovered from his own study of American psychology that the average American is really a Socialist, a revolutionary, but deceives himself into accepting "Americanism" as a substitute for socialism and "America" as a substitute for the revolution. According to Mr. Samson, it is waste of time to attempt to pound Socialist principles into the American's head by direct appeal. Instead, his own inherent socialism should be made clear to him. The present reviewer cannot accept all the author's conclusions. Certainly he does not agree that mere organization of the working class, however essential such organization may be in itself, is enough to bring about a revolution. Nevertheless, the reviewer feels that Mr. Samson has made a brave and worth-while beginning in the effort to find the answer to the often-repeated question: Why is not the American working class, the most advanced in the world, also the most revolutionary?

Colonial Hispanic America. By Charles Edward Chapman. The Macmillan Company. $2.40.

Mr. Chapman's history of Colonial Hispanic America is a thorough and comprehensive treatment of its subject. It dwells, however, a little too much on the corruption and venality of the viceroyal governments of Spain and Portugal in the New World, and it is written too much in textbook style.

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The Bloody Traffic. By A. Fenner Brockway. London: Victor Gollancz. 3s. 6d.

Mr. Brockway, one of the leaders of the Independent Labor Party and a moving spirit in the campaign to organize the British workers against war, has summed up in vigorous, clear-cut language the case against the munitions makers. Some of his facts are new, some are old—the author acknowledges that his is not entirely a work of original research. He goes over much of the ground covered by other writers. Nevertheless, the story he tells is startling—and extremely discouraging. What *are* we to do with these munitions firms that bribe government officials, control the press, create war scares, and sell guns to enemy countries with which to carry on war against the very children of the shareholders of these companies? And it is all done for the sake of profit. The mass murder of millions of human beings means nothing to these munitions makers so long as the entries on the right side of the ledger are plentiful. No one can honestly say, after having read this book, that the American armaments industry should not be ruthlessly exposed and thereafter completely nationalized. But nationalization, as Mr. Brockway pointedly declares, is not enough. It must be only the first step. We must also, he asserts, "bring about a revolution, a complete transformation, in the basis of the present system of civilization."

The Making of Geography. By R. E. Dickman and O. J. R. Howarth. Oxford University Press. $3.

This history of the growth of man's knowledge of the earth and the perfecting of his instruments and devices for enlarging that knowledge is excellently written and illustrated. The exposition of technical matters is clear, and the narrative of the expansion of geographical knowledge is at many points absorbing.

Dickens. By Bernard Darwin. Great Lives Series. The Macmillan Company. 75 cents.

There has seldom been a more successful emergence out of a dismal beginning than that of Dickens, whose childhood was almost unbelievably impoverished and unlucky. His youth was happier, and after "Pickwick," his first and greatest book, success never wandered far from him. A vast and infatuated public waited on him and he entertained them not only with novels but with popular journals under his editorship, theatricals, and public readings from his books. It may almost be said that he worked himself to death playing for them, for his end was hastened by overwork. Mr. Darwin packs a great deal of information into small space without injury to the narrative; but he spoils his good work at times by such allusions to the novels and their leading characters as only a fresh reading of the complete works of Dickens could make intelligible.

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Victoria. By Arthur Ponsonby. Great Lives Series. The Macmillan Company. 75 cents.

The author does not use the narrative method; he writes his little book as a series of essays: The Queen and Her Ministers, The Queen and Foreign Affairs, The Queen and the Empire, The Queen's Husband, etc. The advantage of the method is that a large volume of information can be conveniently handled; the disadvantage, that it makes for less fluent reading than continuous narrative provides. Lord Ponsonby's portrait of Victoria is done competently, but hardly more than that.

Films

Forgotten Children

EVERY so often Hollywood attempts a subject which is either so difficult or so dangerous that a great many people decide beforehand that the result cannot be anything but grotesquely unsuccessful. Such an attempt is to be seen in "Wild Boys of the Road" (Hollywood), which is based on the sensational newspaper accounts of the increasing number of boys and girls in all parts of the country who are leaving their homes, where they can no longer be assured of either food or shelter, to shift for themselves on the road. Of course the principal difficulty of such a subject for Hollywood is the unavoidable necessity of taking something like an explicit social attitude—for Hollywood, as we all know, is not much given to taking attitudes that might prove too seriously disturbing to its great audience. Let us make the necessary comparison: this exciting and unusual American film does not equal in savage concentration the much-admired Soviet film, "The Road to Life." Everything in it is considerably softened down for our finer American sensibilities. The boys and girls are not allowed to become so physically filthy or so morally depraved as in the Russian picture. Moreover, no attention is paid to the sex problems or *moeurs* of these irresponsible nomads, although the latter figure prominently in all the newspaper stories. It is also less intellectual in that it fails to indicate the obstacles that stand in the way of any eventual resocialization of these forgotten children of our present economic order. But, despite all these faults, the picture constitutes a very much more powerful criticism of that order than one had expected from Hollywood. It becomes a criticism by virtue of certain objective elements in its subject matter which no amount of softening or sentimentalization can altogether efface. Never before does one recall having witnessed an American picture whose climax is made to consist in a pitched battle between a band of ragged outlaws and the police, in which the sympathy is manifestly with the former. This has already been prepared for, as a matter of fact, by two other situations of extraordinary violence: one in which a railroad guard who has attacked one of the girls in the band is promptly hurled out of the moving train to his death; another in which the assembled members of the band, suddenly awakened to the idea that they are really an army, drive off a whole contingent of railroad detectives. There has also been the incident of the boy who has not dodged the trains rapidly enough and has to have his leg amputated—secretly, and without anaesthetic. Not even the heavy pathos with which this incident is blurred is likely to make many people forget the chain of causes which have made it possible. And this is in general true for whatever other efforts toward softening have been made throughout, especially in the last scene, in which two boys and their girl companion, arrested for a theft which they did not commit, are released by a kindly Juvenile Court judge with some muttered promises of a "new deal." In the background, over the bench of justice, one makes out ever so dimly the familiar outline of the Blue Eagle—the new *deus ex machina,* apparently, of the American screen. Somehow the popular bird looks very small; and what we take away from the picture is not so much the renewed hope that this symbol should evoke as the feeling that our society is simply deluding itself if it pretends not to hear the barbarians at the gates. The hordes are on the march, and whether or not they will reach Rome is the question.

Anyone committed to such a point of view could make a very good case against the German and Viennese operettas to which we are subjected from time to time on the ground that they appeal to a debased bourgeois taste which no longer exists with the same strength that it once possessed. "Waltz Time" (Little Carnegie) is a British version of Johann Strauss's "Die Fledermaus." It is a wandering, heavy-footed, and generally mirthless effort to recapture the spirit of a kind of entertainment which no more belongs to our time than do the sentiments and attitudes to which it once appealed.

WILLIAM TROY

Drama

Mr. O'Neill's Comedy

THE audience which gathered at the Guild Theater to witness Eugene O'Neill's new play was even more surprised than it had expected to be. We had all been warned that "Ah, Wilderness!" was a comedy and that the star was no less unexpected a person than George M. Cohan himself, but we were still not prepared to find an engaging little domestic piece whose virtues bear not the slightest relation to any of those one is accustomed to find in Mr. O'Neill's plays. The audience signified its approval by ready laughter and frequent applause, but if the comedy had been produced anonymously and the spectators given ten guesses at the author, I doubt if Mr. O'Neill's name would have appeared on any of the lists.

Inevitably this tale of calf-love and its accompanying phenomena will be wonderingly compared with the work of Booth Tarkington and even with Miss Rose Franken's still more sentimental version of the theme in "Another Language." Nor is the comparison so completely outrageous as one would think that it must inevitably be, for Mr. O'Neill's method is here essentially the method of direct and somewhat softened realism. This typical American family—the scene is a Connecticut town in 1906—has the virtues which William Dean Howells might have seen in it and no vices which he would have thought it improper to mention. The kindly, rather futile mother, the wise if uncultivated father, the uncle with a weakness for strong drink, and the callow son who discovers love and literature together are recalled, as it were, with a tender nostalgic affection. The boy comes through, and the play ends with the two parents standing in the moonlight, happily remembering their own springtime and concluding that autumn also has its joys. Is this—can this be—the work of an author who has so often brushed sentiment aside, assaulted heaven itself, and cursed God for giving his creatures thirsts which no earthly liquor can quench and passions which can consume nothing except themselves?

It is not merely that Mr. O'Neill has dispensed with those murders and rapes, those incests and insanities, which furnish the material for most of his tragedies—as well, let his flippant critics remember, as the material for most of the great tragedies of the world by any authors whatsoever. The really striking

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fact is that for the purposes of this play he has also dispensed with the whole of that attitude toward human life which has served in the past to distinguish him from dramatists content to deal with life in terms of its local manifestations and current standards of value. All his other recent work and, to a lesser extent, even all his earlier work dealt with ultimates. The characters had, of course, their local habitations and names; some of them—the Anna Christies and the Ephraim Cabots—were rooted in a time and place to an extent to which the Hairy Apes and the William A. Browns obviously were not. But even the most concrete of his personages were only secondarily and for the sake of convenience men and women specifically of a yesterday or a today and dressed in the mental or physical costumes of their period. Essentially they were all naked souls; forked radishes trying to be gods; helpless Lears exposed to the thunder of high heaven and the pitiless rain of God. The houses they lived in, the clothes they wore, the words with which they tried in vain to conceal from themselves and others the real nature of their predicament, were all so little substantial that they were only by convention treated as real at all. The sky of eternity was the only roof above them, and when they talked they could actually communicate with no one except themselves and God. Something of this sort is what O'Neill's symbolism has always been intended to convey, and it is everything of this sort which "Ah, Wilderness!" quite deliberately refrains from suggesting at any moment.

To say this is not to say that the play is not an extremely good one of its kind or that, as presented by the Guild, it does not supply an evening's entertainment of charming humor and pleasant sentiment. As a matter of fact, it does just that, for in addition to its merits as a play it is beautifully directed by Philip Moeller and very skilfully played by an excellent company, from which, however, Mr. Cohan stands out by virtue of the unobtrusive but not-to-be-forgotten authenticity of his performance. Nor is it further to be supposed that the comparisons with inferior writers which I mentioned as inevitable are really fair. The superior truth and sincerity of Mr. O'Neill's picture of the tragi-comedy of youth may possibly be suggested by the fact that this young man does not want to go to Paris to study art, and it may, perhaps, be even more truly suggested by the additional fact that the poets he has discovered are not—as seems inevitable in more sentimentalized versions—Shelley and Keats, but only the vastly more probable Oscar Wilde and Omar. Nevertheless, the amazing fact remains that Mr. O'Neill is writing about sentiment rather than passion, and about men and women who are quite contentedly unaware of anything not publicly recognized in a Connecticut family of quite ordinary people.

"Ah, Wilderness!" is almost certainly a hit, and so too is that hilarious experiment in miscellaneous libel, the musical revue called "As Thousands Cheer" (Music Box). Of story there is none, but we have rarely if ever been presented with a more witty, spirited, or hard-hitting series of topical sketches than those which Moss Hart has here put together and Irving Berlin set to music. Perhaps the highest moment is either that when Aimée McPherson (Helen Broderick) comes to sound out Gandhi (Clifton Webb) on the prospects for a vaudeville tour together, or that when Marilyn Miller, Leslie Adams, and the rest demonstrate the effect of Noel Coward on the personnel of the hotel which he has been gracing with his presence. Nevertheless, all the sketches are on an unusually high level, and with the help of the very talented performers the whole becomes far and away the best thing of its kind in town. Incidentally, full credit should be given to the contributions of Leslie Adams, who is not featured on the program but is remembered for his playing of the husband in "Good-Bye Again." Ethel Waters, also, is outstanding.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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Sunday, October 15, 8 o'clock Admission 25c
OTHER LECTURES
Friday, Oct. 13, 7 o'clock—A Marxian Interpretation of Freud and Psychoanalysis—Bertram D. Wolfe
Friday, Oct. 13, 8:30 o'clock—The A. F. of L. Convention—American Labor Under the NRA—Jay Lovestone
NEW WORKERS SCHOOL, 51 West 14th Street
Admission 25c

□ JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH says □

AH, WILDERNESS. Guild Theater. Reviewed in this issue.

AMOURETTE. Henry Millers Theater. Play by Clare Kummer, direction by Bulgakov, and acting by Francesca Brunning, the star of "One Sunday Afternoon." Nevertheless, not so good.

A PARTY. Playhouse. Agreeable parlor entertainment in which Mrs. Patrick Campbell gives an imitation of herself trading insults at a soirée with a younger actress said to represent our own Tallulah Bankhead.

AS THOUSANDS CHEER. Music Box. Reviewed in this issue.

DOUBLE DOOR. Ritz Theater. An exciting melodrama obviously suggested by the Wendell case.

HEAT LIGHTENING. Booth Theater. Simple but exciting melodrama about two girls and a gas station in the great desert. One of the two things so far most worth seeing.

HOLD YOUR HORSES. Winter Garden. Amiable madness with Joe Cook.

MEN IN WHITE. Broadhurst Theater. Extraordinary production of an extraordinary play.

MURDER AT THE VANITIES. New Amsterdam. Unholy mixture of absurd melodrama and routine review. Nevertheless a big success.

ONE SUNDAY AFTERNOON. 48th St. Theater. Pleasant little play held over from last season.

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Some Notable Fall Books

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Belloc, Hilaire. Charles I of England. J. B. Lippincott. $4.

Benson, E. F. Edward VII. Longmans, Green. $3.

Bobbé, Dorothy. De Witt Clinton. Minton, Balch. $3.

Brittain, Vera. Testament of Youth. Macmillan. $2.50.

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Bryant, Arthur. Samuel Pepys. Macmillan. $3.

Chesterton, G. K. Saint Thomas Aquinas. Sheed and Ward.

Chinard, Gilbert. Honest John Adams. Little, Brown. $3.75.

Churchill, Winston S. Marlborough. Scribner. $4.

Clifton, Violet. The Book of Talbot. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

Dell, Floyd. Homecoming: An Autobiography. Farrar and Rinehart. $3.

Dennett, Tyler. John Hay. Dodd, Mead. $5.

De Sélincourt, Ernest. Dorothy Wordsworth. Oxford Press. $7.

Edwards, J. Hugh. David Lloyd George. Sears. $7.50.

Fay, Bernard. The Two Franklins: Fathers of American Democracy. Little, Brown. $3.50.

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Of *The Nation*, published weekly, Wednesday at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1933.

STATE OF NEW YORK } ss:
COUNTY OF NEW YORK }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Oswald Garrison Villard, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the publisher of *The Nation*, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD
Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of September, 1933.

R. B. COUSINS

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(Seal)

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